

# **Vietnamese, Laotian, Ethiopian, & former Soviet Union Refugees In Texas**

Office of Minority Health  
Resource Center  
PO Box 37337  
Washington, DC 20013-7337



Findings from  
**The Texas Refugee Study**

Texas Office of Immigration & Refugee Affairs  
Texas Department of Human Services

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disability, political beliefs, or religion.

MM502/84

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## **The Texas Refugee Study**

Texas Office of Immigration & Refugee Affairs

Texas Department of Human Services

**Eric H. Taylor**

**Lisa S. Barton**



# The Texas Refugee Study

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## *Special thanks to:*

Governor Ann Richards

Kassahun Bisrat, Bob Fleming, Ngoc-Linh Nguyen,  
YMCA of Greater Houston, Refugee Services Alliance,  
Texas Center for Employment Services, Thuc Nguyen,  
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# INTRODUCTION

Refugees are individuals who have fled their native countries because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution due to their race, religion, nationality, social group or political opinion. The U.S. accepts refugees as a matter of policy because of current or historical relationships between people of other nations and our country. For example, Southeast Asians who helped the U.S. government fight against Communism became refugees when the Communist regime took control in the region.

In the past two decades, Texas has become home to more than 100,000 refugees from more than 40 countries. The flow of refugees into Texas continues slowly and steadily. For instance, the U.S. State Department will assign about 6,000 new refugees to Texas in 1994. Many of these new refugees are reuniting with family members already in the state. Refugee families often come together within Texas' urban areas to build supportive communities that are rich in ethnic and cultural diversity.

While refugees continue to come to Texas and communities continue to grow, little information has been collected, analyzed, and shared about the lives of Texas refugees. As the agency responsible for administering the Federal Refugee Resettlement program, we at the Texas Office of Immigration and Refugee Affairs (TOIRA) wanted to better understand refugees. Knowing the undertaking was to be large, we carefully determined four central goals. The goals of the project, called the Texas Refugee Study, were to collect valid and reliable information to better direct

refugee policy, improve services to refugees, give service providers information to help them become more competitive in seeking federal and private dollars, and help refugees better understand their own communities.

A team of refugee community leaders, service providers, and researchers was assembled to plan the project. Four groups were targeted: Vietnamese, Laotian, former Soviet Union, and Ethiopian refugees. These groups make up more than 80% of all refugees in Texas. The Texas Refugee Study consisted of more than 1,400 hour-long interviews with refugees in Houston, Texas. The interviews were conducted in each refugee's native language by specially-trained interviewers who themselves came to Texas as refugees. These community leaders were crucial to the study's success, and the availability and accuracy of this information can be directly attributed to the dedication and effort of the individuals on the Texas Refugee Study team.

This report shares the findings from our endeavor. The intent is to provide descriptive information based on analysis of the answers to the broad set of questions covered in the interviews. We use graphs and charts to communicate most of the findings, and have tried to keep written text, interpretation, and sophisticated statistical analyses to a minimum. More specific and sophisticated analysis are available in other Texas Refugee Study reports. Before applying or generalizing the findings of this report we encourage you to read the methodology and limitations sections.







# VIETNAMESE REFUGEES

Interviewer Manager  
Steven P. Hoang

Interviewers  
Khoi Tien Bui, Chy Duong Do, Tue Quang Dinh, Hi Thi Duong,  
Martin Quach Huynh Ha, Steven P. Hoang, Thom Van Luong,  
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Stephen G. Tran, Thu T. Vu, Hanh C. Vuong

803 Interviews Conducted

The resettlement of Vietnamese refugees in the U.S. and Texas began in 1975 following the departure of U.S. troops from Southeast Asia. The North Vietnamese victory forced many Vietnamese to flee their homes because of widespread persecution of people who had supported the U.S. The first Vietnamese to arrive in the U.S. were typically well educated and from urban areas. U.S. government policy permitted continued immigration of Vietnamese in an effort to reunite refugees with their family members. In addition to the Vietnamese resettled in Texas by the State Department, thousands of refugees have migrated to Texas from other states. This migration occurred, in part, due to the lure of Texas' oil and fishing industry in the 1980's and also because of Texas' warm climate.

The exact number of Vietnamese in Texas is unknown. Using U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement information about resettlement, and limited migration information, we estimate that 70,000 to 90,000 Vietnamese refugees live in the state. This number does not include the Vietnamese-Americans who have been born in the U.S., and are U.S. citizens by right of birth. Including these citizens, we estimate that 120,000 to 180,000 Vietnamese live in Texas, and this number continues to grow.



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## Vietnamese Refugees

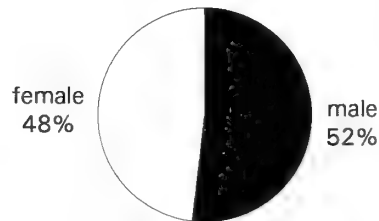
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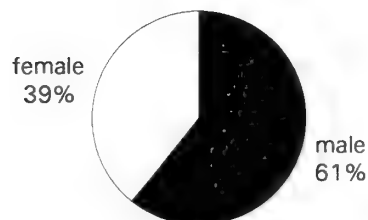
## DEMOGRAPHICS

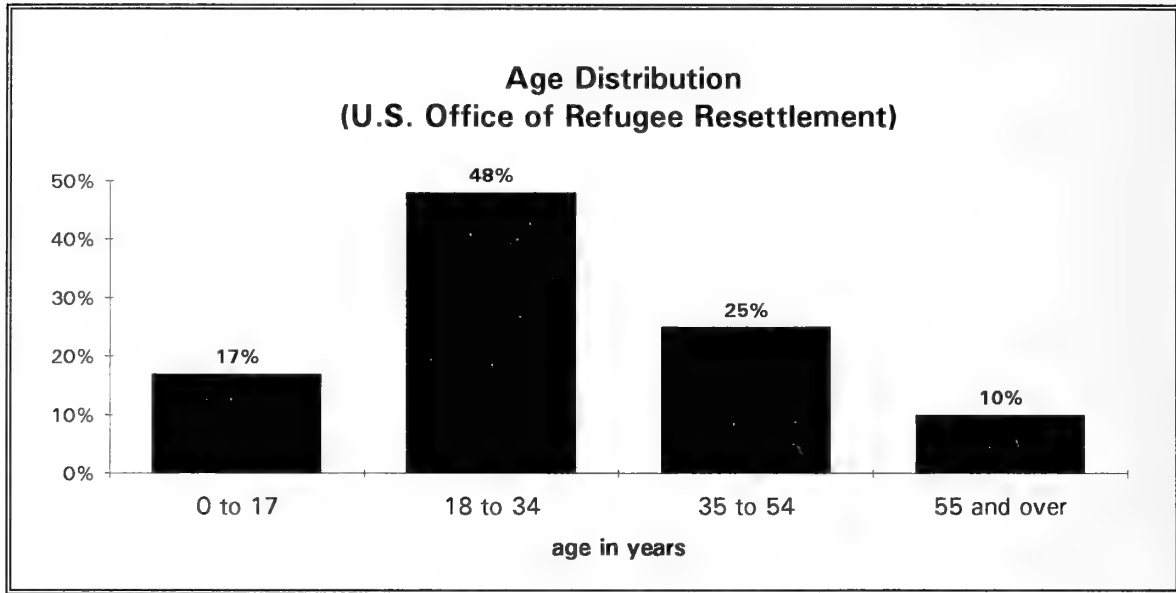
**Distribution of Males and Females  
(U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement)**



According to the U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement, slightly more Vietnamese refugee males have resettled in Texas than females. The study's sample consisted of about 9% more males than are believed to exist in Texas' entire Vietnamese refugee population.

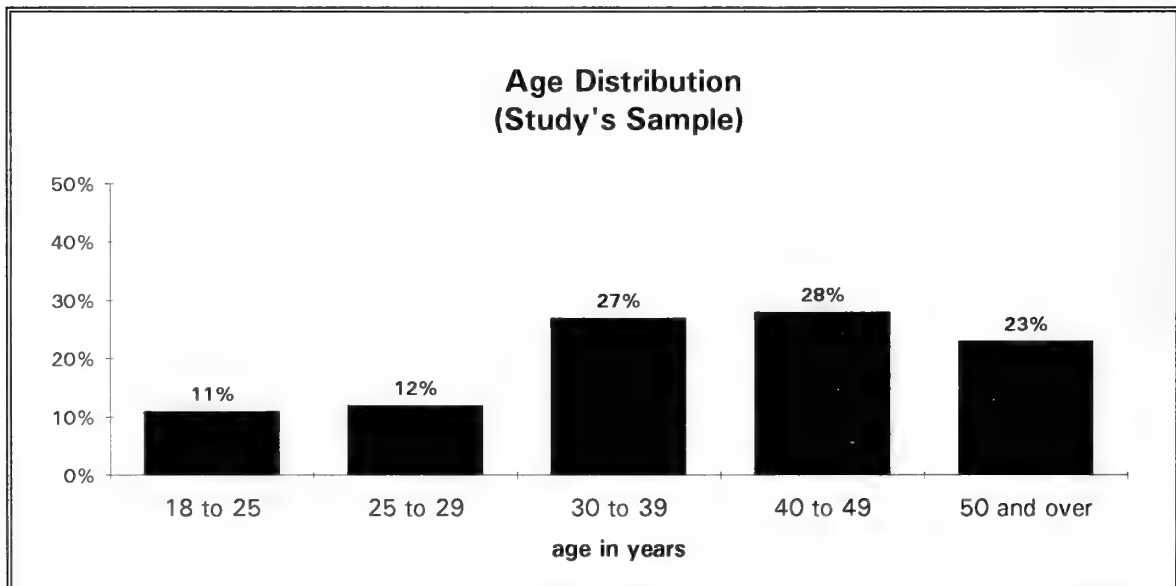
**Distribution of Males and Females  
(Study's Sample)**

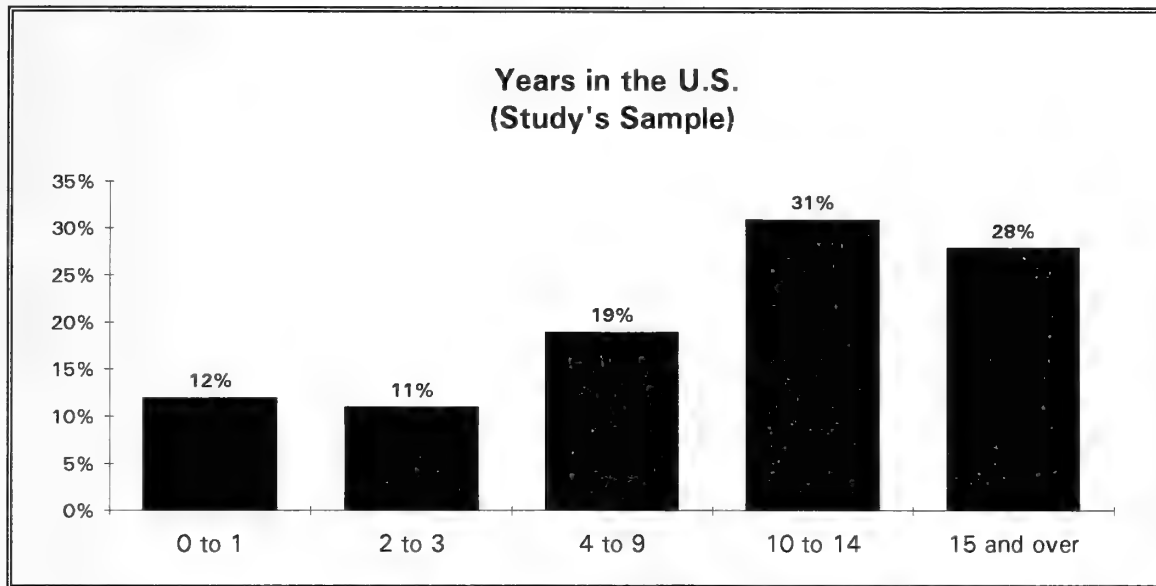




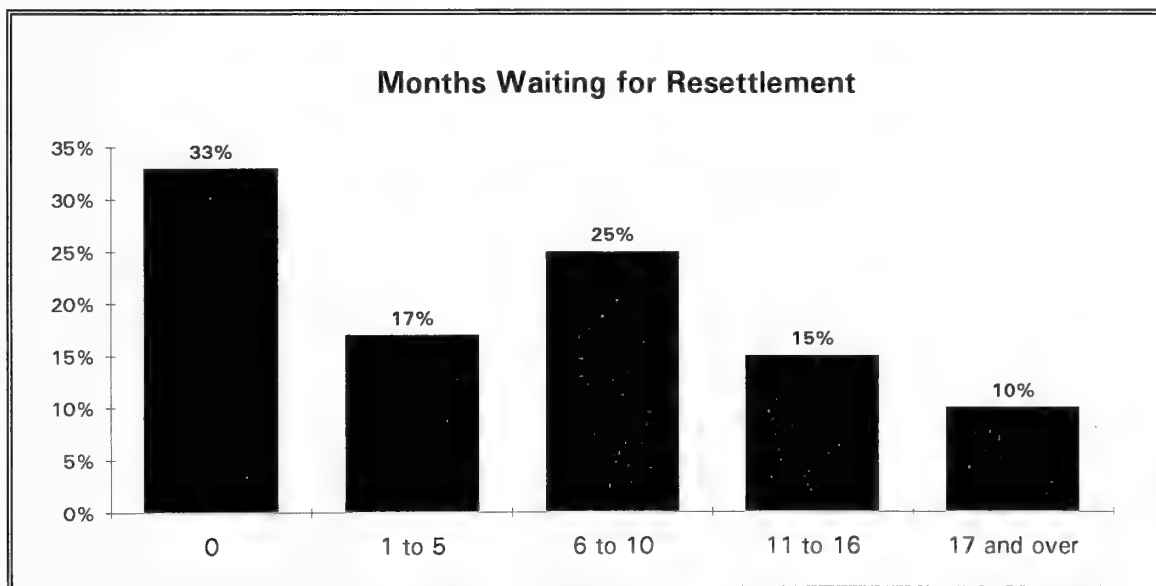
Information from the U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement shows that Vietnamese refugees in Texas are both young and old, but predominantly in the 18 to 54 age range. Additionally, there is a large population of Vietnamese-Americans ages 0 to 19 who were born in the United States to Vietnamese refugee parents. These children are U.S. citizens and are not officially considered refugees.

To participate in the study, a refugee had to be at least 18 years old. Each Vietnamese interview was given a certain weight based on when the refugee had come to the U.S. (see Methodology). Of the weighted interviews most Vietnamese refugees (67%) were between the ages of 25 and 49, as seen below. However, a considerable portion of the interviewees were ages 50 and older. The average age of the Vietnamese refugee in the study was 40 years.

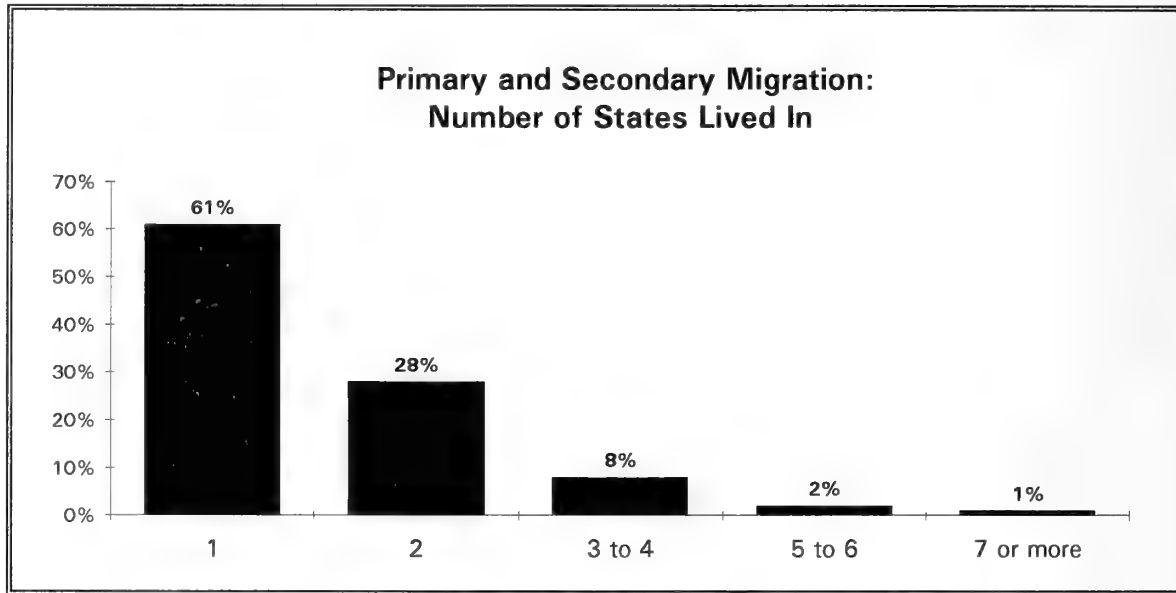




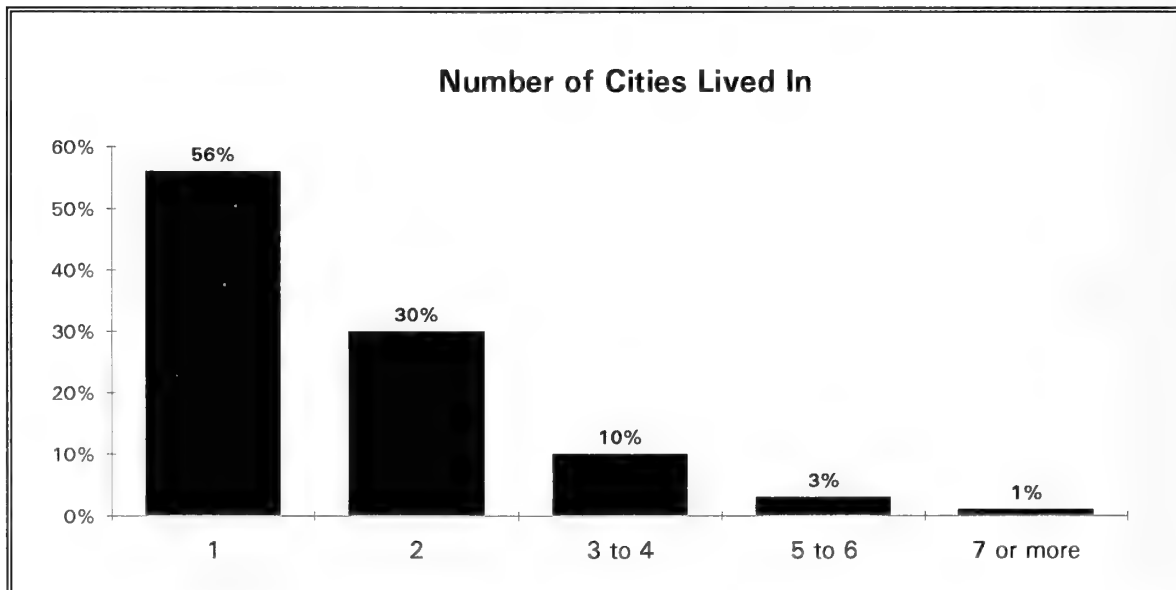
Of the weighted sample of interviews, the majority of Vietnamese in the study (59%) arrived in the U.S. prior to 1983 (the study was conducted in 1993). More than a quarter of the participants came to the U.S. in 1978 or before, with most arriving in 1975. However, 23% of the Vietnamese participants had arrived in the U.S. after 1990. Most of the Vietnamese refugees would have arrived sooner, as seen below, had they not waited in holding camps.



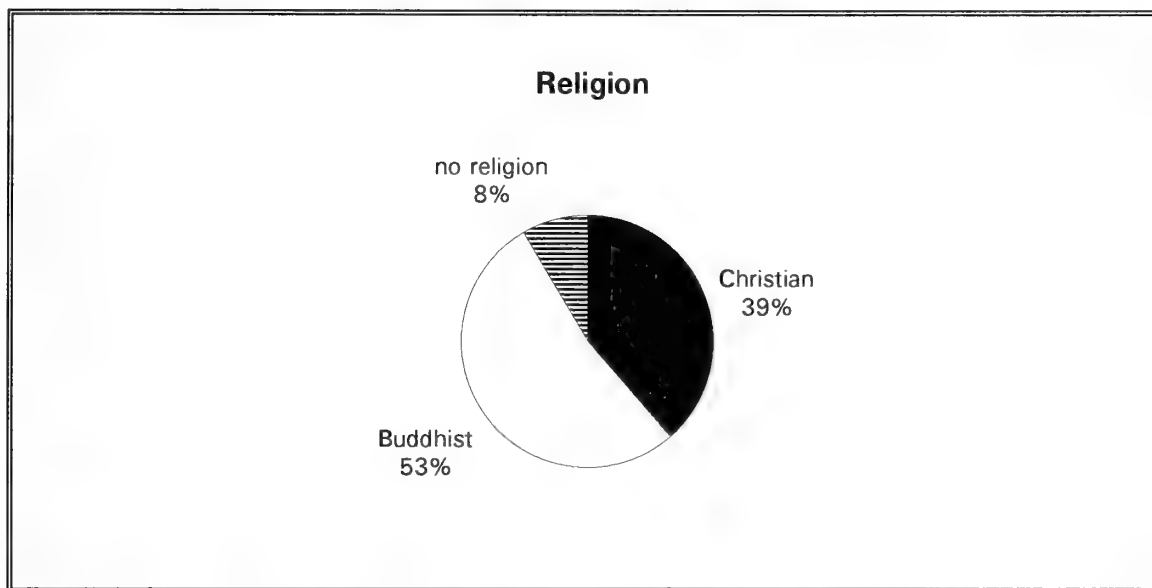
Most Vietnamese refugees spent time in holding camps before resettling in the U.S. On average, they spent about seven months, and 22% spent a year or more in camps.



Texas has been the only state of residence for 61% of Texas' Vietnamese refugees. However, two of five migrated to Texas from another state, and 11% have lived in at least three different states.

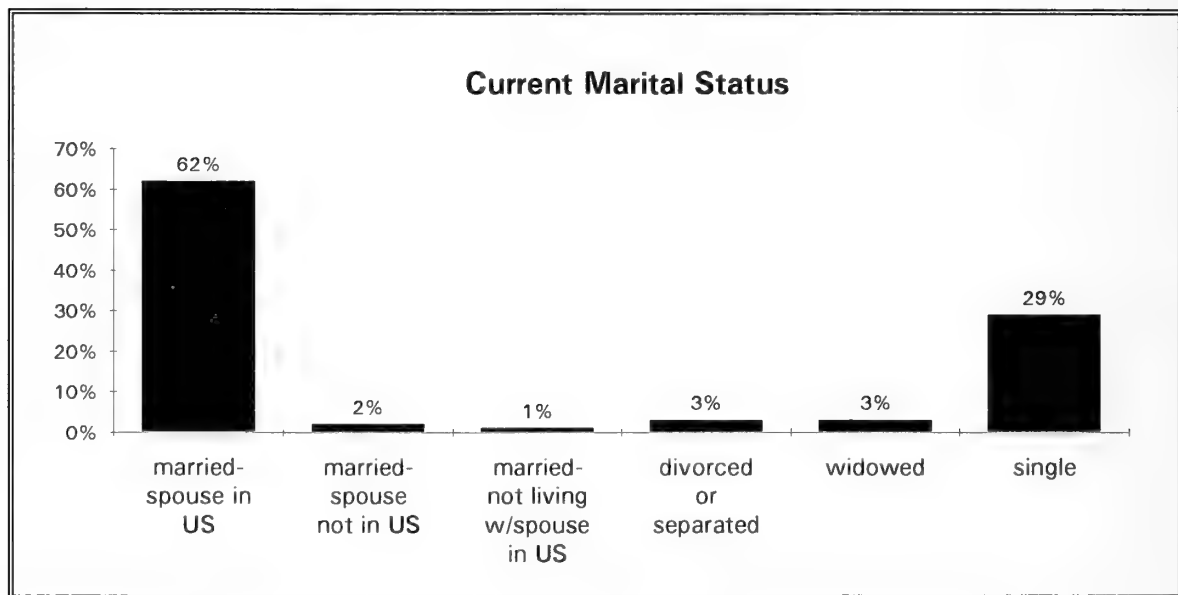


Most Vietnamese refugees in the study (conducted in Houston) originally resettled in Houston and have not lived in any other U.S. city. However, 44% have lived in a U.S. city other than Houston, and 14% have lived in three or more U.S. cities.

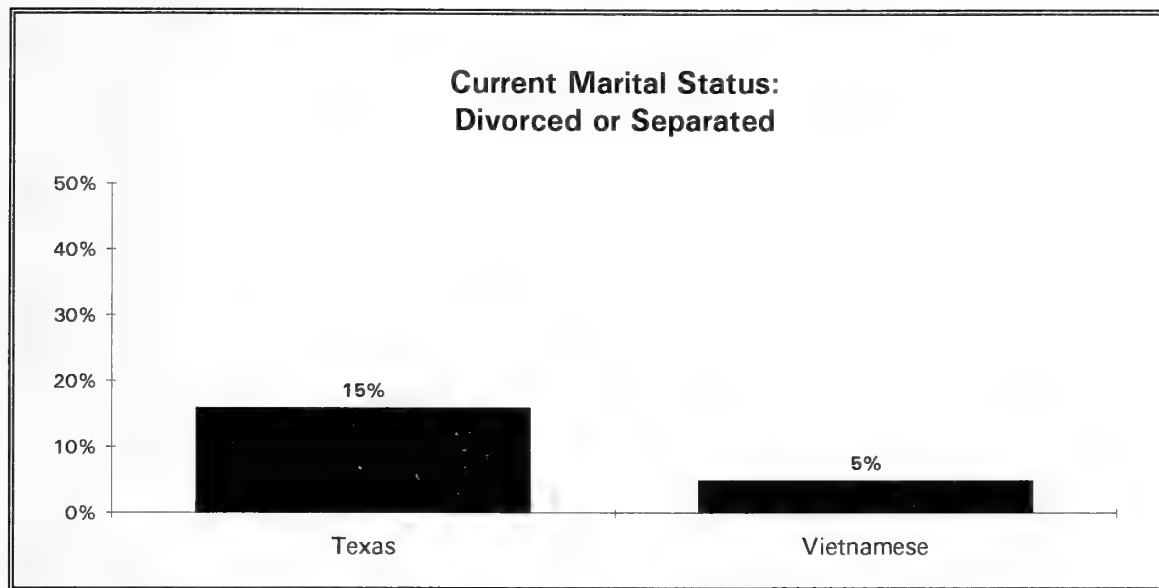


The majority of Vietnamese refugees are Buddhist, but many consider themselves Christian. (Only religions named by at least 2% of interviewees were included.)

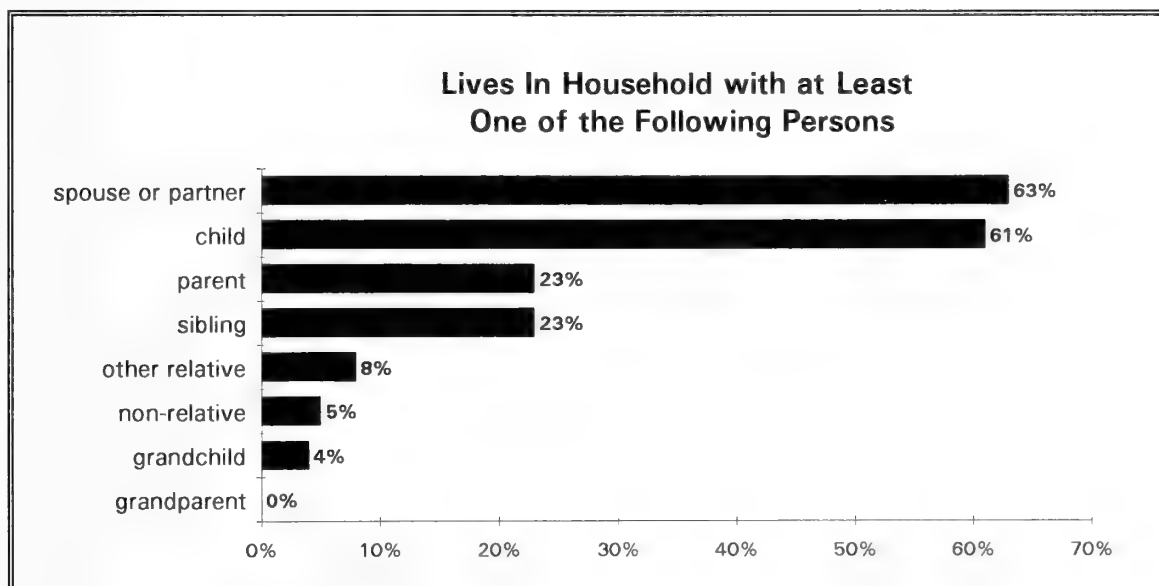
## FAMILY & HOUSEHOLD



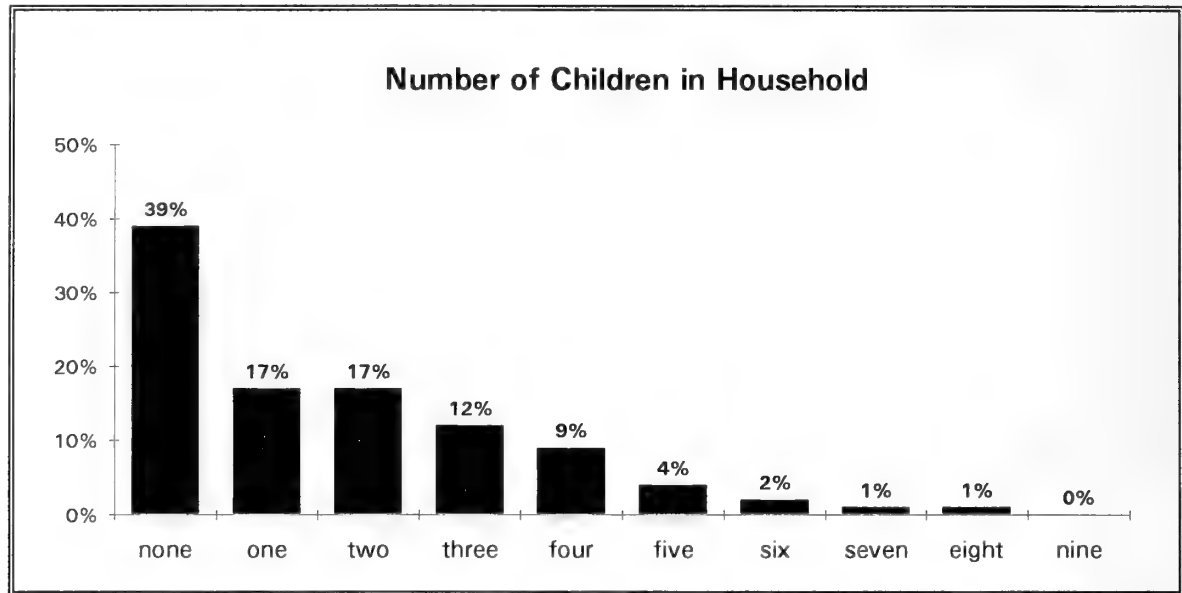
Most Vietnamese refugees are currently married, and 3% are widowed. However, 29% remain single, and 3% are currently divorced or separated.



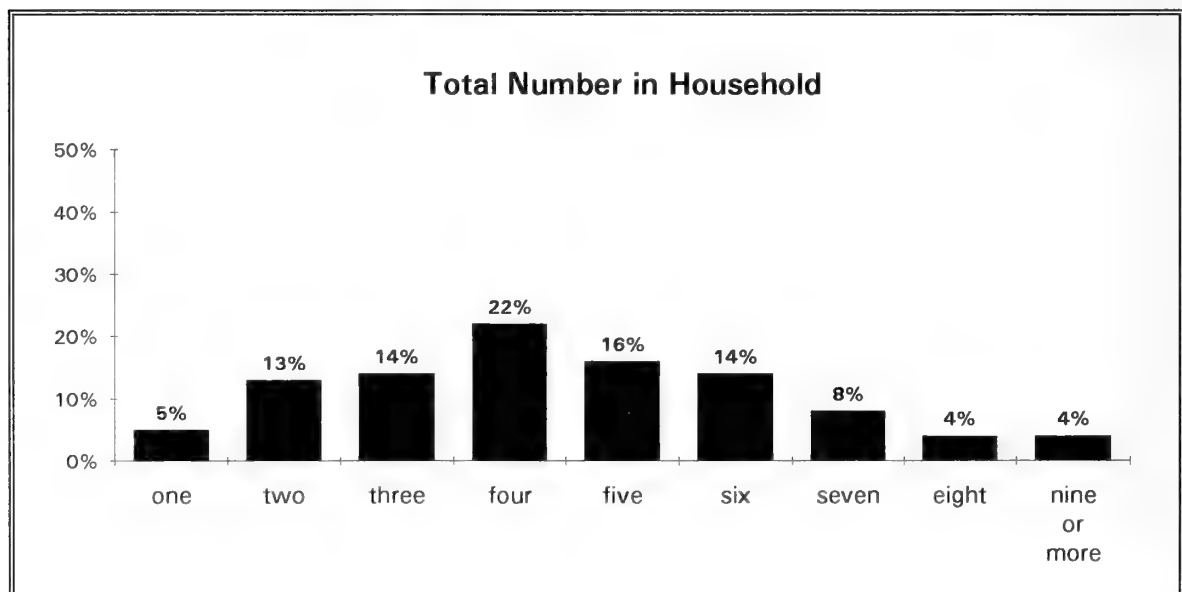
In considering individuals who have been married, Vietnamese refugees are divorced or separated at about one-third the rate of Texas' overall population. Texans (according to 1990 U.S. Census) and Vietnamese (Texas Refugee Study) indicate their current marital status as divorced or separated at the percentages shown above. These calculations represent the percentage of individuals whose current marital status is either divorced or separated. Divorced individuals who are currently re-married are not represented in these percentages.



The majority of Vietnamese refugees live with their spouse and at least one child. Living with a parent, sibling, or other relative is also common.

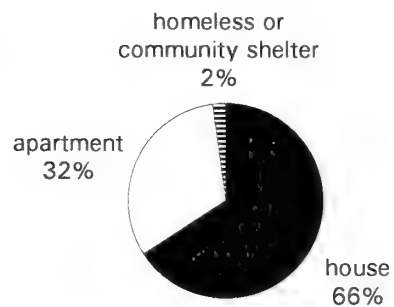


Many Vietnamese refugees live with no children, but living with one, two, three, or four children is also common.



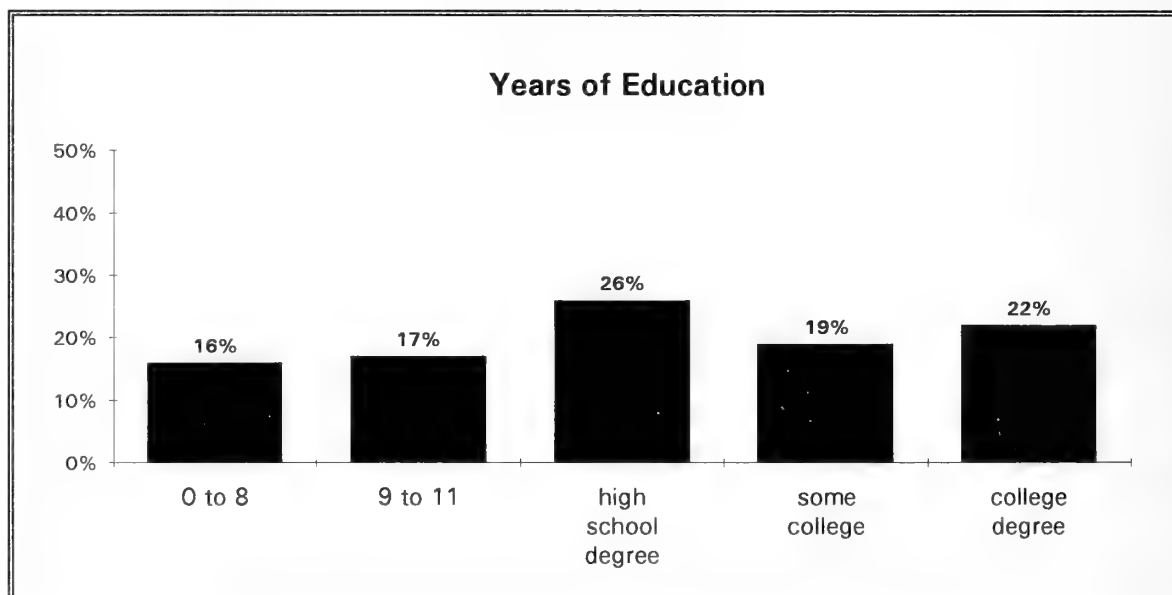
Vietnamese refugees live in households of varying sizes, but on average there are 4.5 people living together.



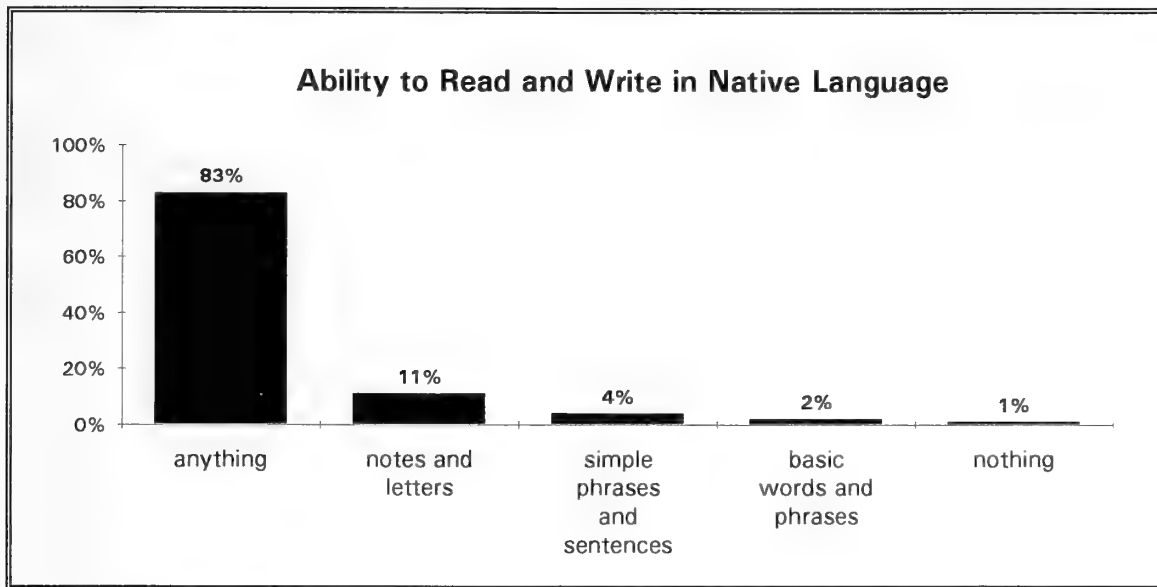
**Type of Dwelling**

Two-thirds of Vietnamese refugees live in a home. About one-third are in apartments, and a small percentage are without housing.

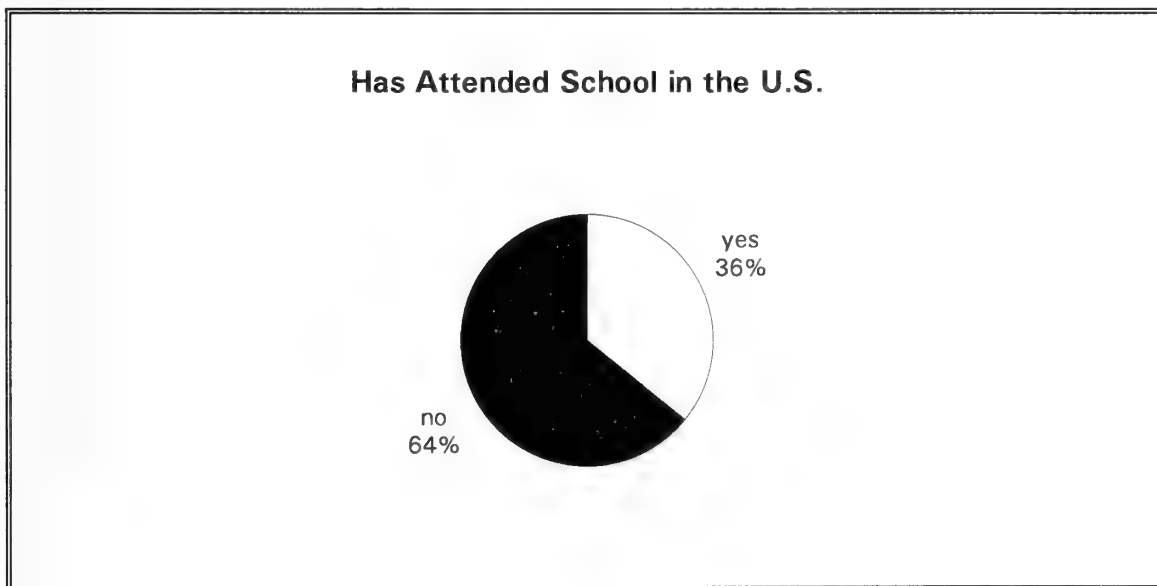
## EDUCATION & ENGLISH



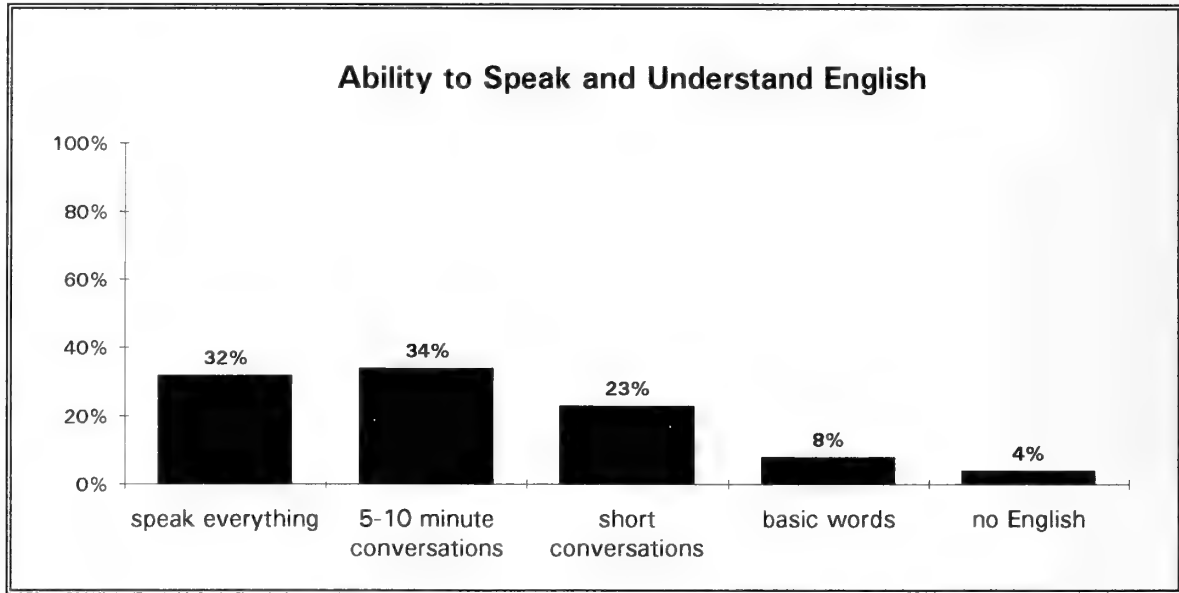
Vietnamese refugees are very diverse in their educational backgrounds. Sixty-seven percent have at least a high school degree, 41% have some college, and 22% have a college degree. (Educational level includes schooling before and after arrival in the U.S.)



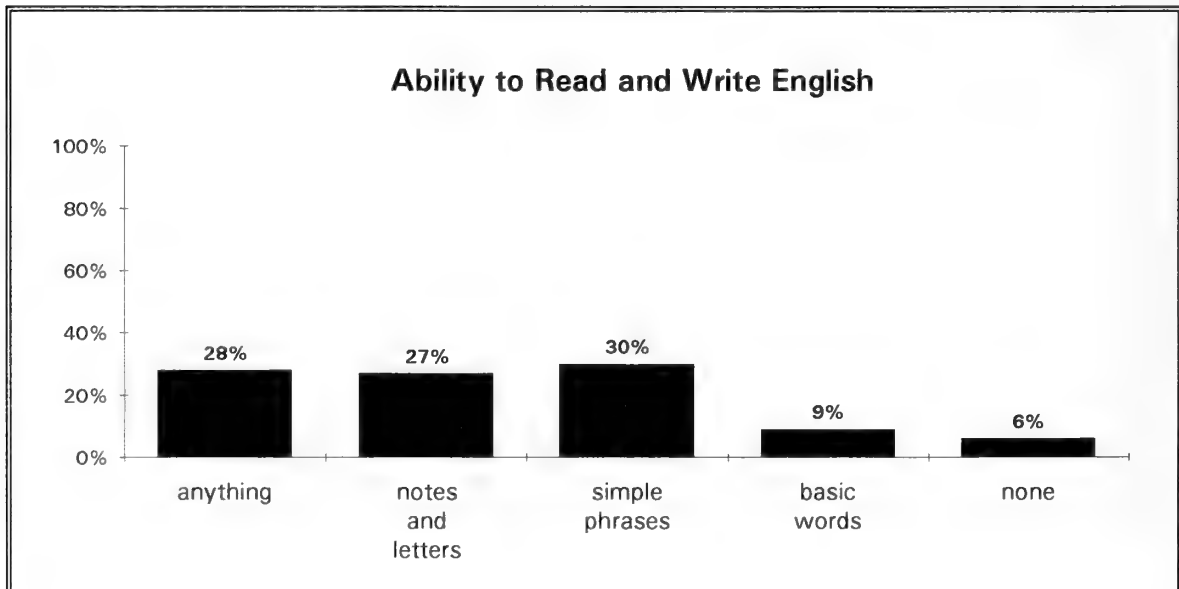
Most Vietnamese refugees are able to read and write in their native language.

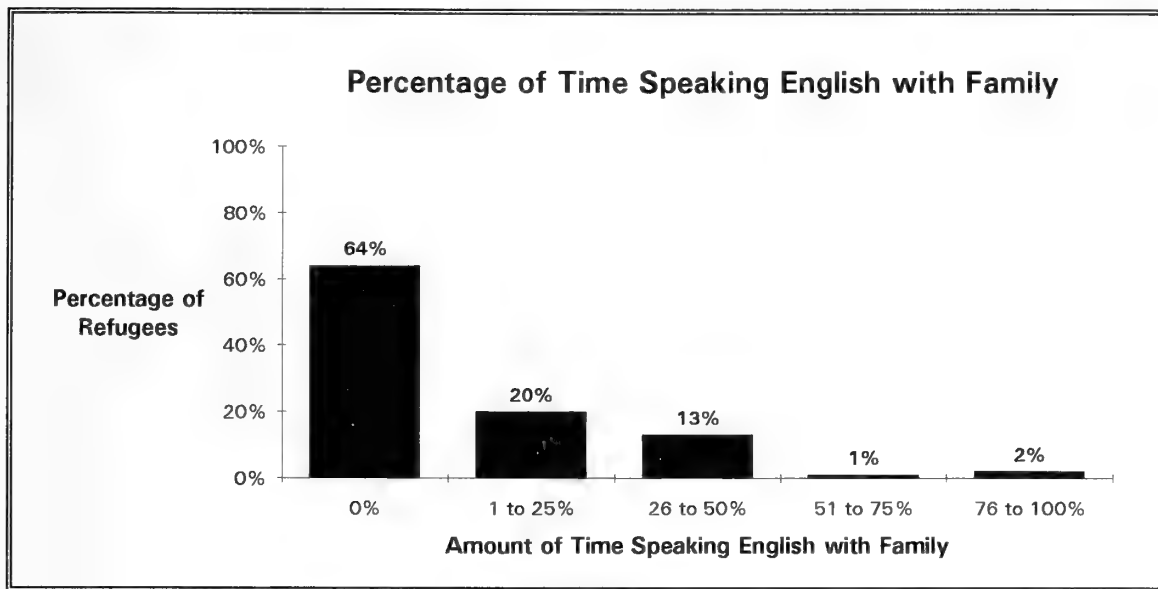


While most Vietnamese refugees received all their formal education before coming to the U.S., more than one-third have some education in the U.S. U.S. citizen children (not represented in above chart) of these refugees are typically receiving their education in Texas public or private schools.

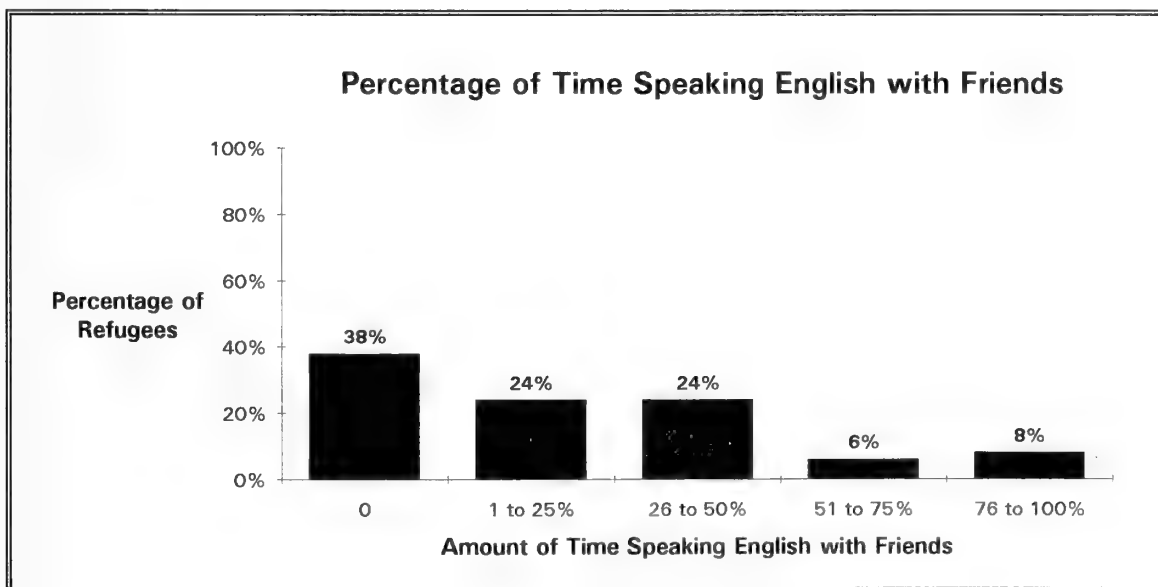


One-third of Vietnamese refugees are fluent in English, and 88% can speak and understand at least short conversations. This trend is similar to their abilities to read and write English.

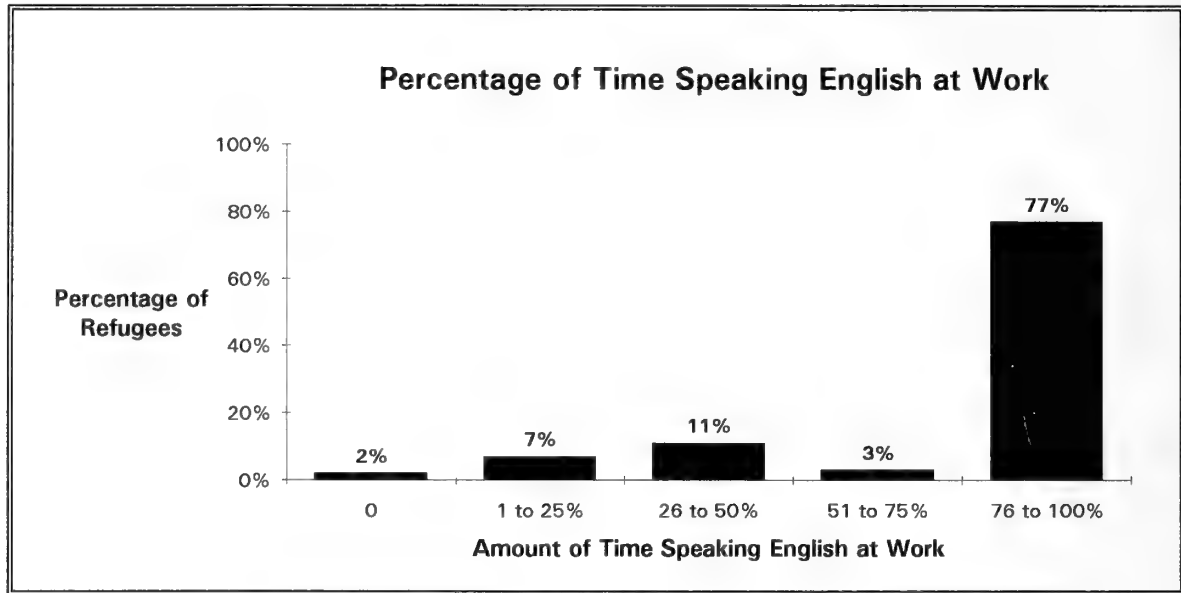




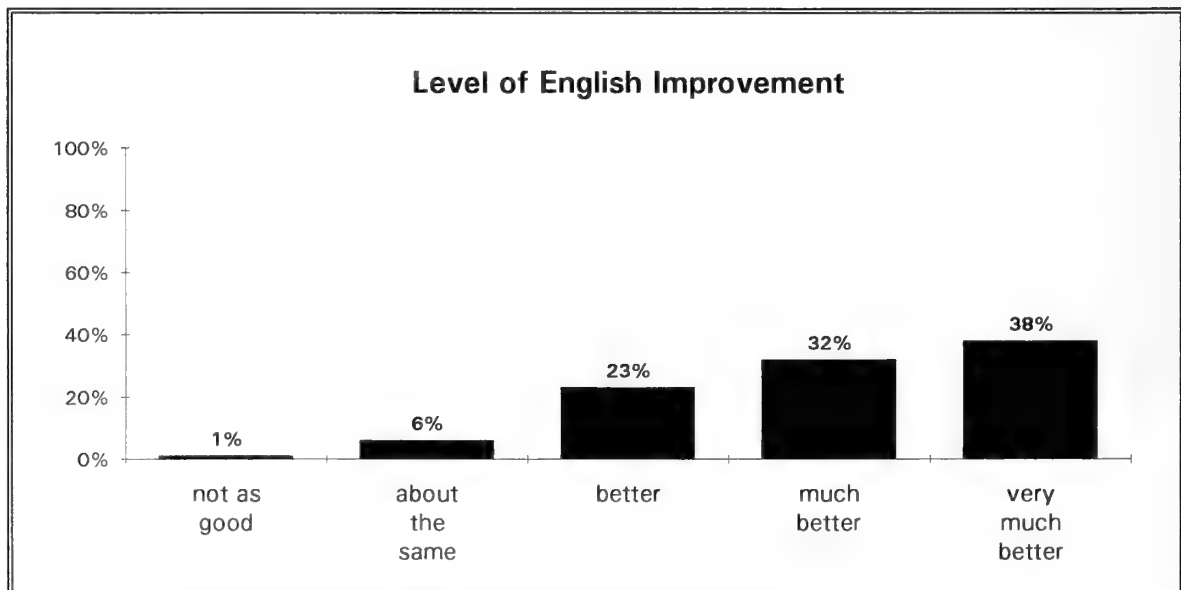
When speaking to family members most Vietnamese refugees speak only their native language. Almost two-thirds report never speaking English with family, and only 3% report speaking English more than half the time with family members. On average, Vietnamese refugees speak English with family members 10% of the time.



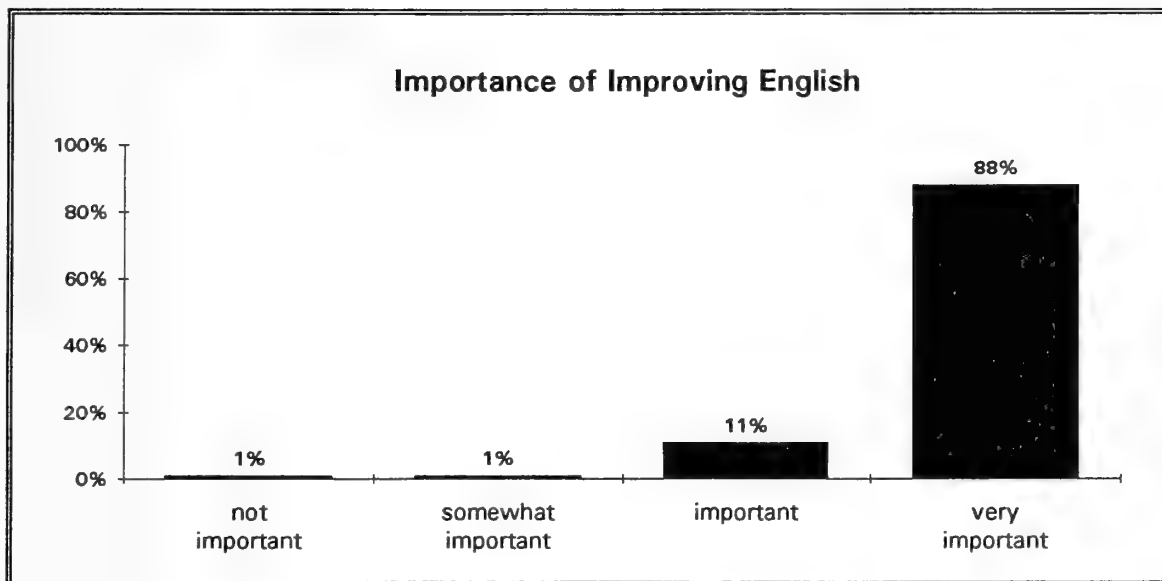
Use of English increases when speaking with friends. Sixty-two percent report speaking English with friends at least some of the time, and 14% speak English more than half the time. On average, Vietnamese refugees speak English with friends 24% of the time.



At work, language use changes dramatically for Vietnamese refugees. Almost all Vietnamese report speaking some English at work, and 77% speak English at least three-fourths of the time while working. On average, Vietnamese refugees speak English 87% of the time while working.



Most Vietnamese refugees report improvement in their English speaking abilities since living in the U.S.



Almost all Vietnamese refugees believe it is important to learn more English.

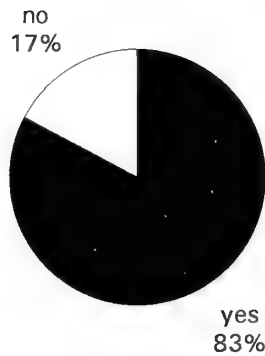
### Common Methods of Learning English

TV or Radio in the U.S.	89%
Talking and Listening to People in the U.S.	87%
Reading Newspapers, Magazines or Books in the U.S.	74%
School in Native Country	71%
ESL or Other Formal Class in the U.S.	65%
School in the U.S.	40%
Children in the U.S.	29%
Everyday Conversation in Native Country	13%

Vietnamese have used and continue to use a wide variety of methods to improve their English skills.

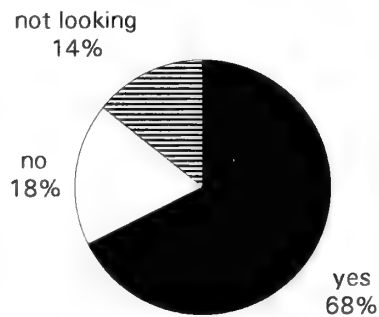
## EMPLOYMENT & INCOME

### Have Worked in the U.S.



Most Vietnamese refugees have worked in the U.S.

### Currently Working



Two-thirds of Vietnamese refugees are currently working, and 18% are looking for work. Those not looking for work are typically in school, full time homemakers, or retired.



## Vietnamese Occupational Areas

OCCUPATION	PERCENT	AVERAGE HOURLY WAGE
manufacturing	20%	\$ 9.64
computer/engineer	10%	\$22.06
technician work	9%	\$11.16
self-employed/business owner	8%	\$ 8.23
construction trades	6%	\$10.14
food preparation/service	6%	\$ 6.34
personal service	6%	\$ 6.69
professional/administrative	6%	\$14.22
clerical/administrative support	5%	\$ 8.17
labor	5%	\$ 7.63
sales	5%	\$ 8.85
auto repair/transportation	4%	\$10.65
health/social care	3%	\$12.54
education	2%	\$17.13
farming/fishing	1%	*
freight/stock/materials	1%	*
general help	1%	*
religious	1%	*
science/research	<1%	*

\* Not enough interviews to calculate wage.

The occupational areas for Vietnamese refugees are very diverse. The most common type of work is manufacturing, with one in five workers employed in this area. Computer programming and engineering, as well as technician work, are also very common. The best paid occupations, on average, are computer and engineering jobs, followed by education, professional and administrative, and technician work. (Note that these occupations may only be applicable to the Houston area, and wages are averages for a relatively small number of interviewees. Wages are affected by, among other things, length of employment and skill level.)

## Vietnamese Interviewees' Occupations

### General Manufacturing

machinist / machine operating	7.6 %
assembly	4.1 %
electric assembly	3.0 %
general manufacturing	2.3 %
production analyst	1.1 %
printing	1.0 %
plastics	.5 %
production manager	.4 %
goldsmith	.1 %

### Engineer / Computer Programmer

engineer	5.4 %
computer programmer	4.3 %
systems analyst	.7 %

### Technologist / Technician

general technician	3.6 %
electronic / digitization work	1.4 %
health / medical technician	1.1 %
computer operator / technician	1.1 %
drafting designer / technician	1.1 %
engineering technician	.4 %

### Business Owner / Self-Employed

general	7.9 %
---------	-------

### Personal Service Occupation

manicurist	2.4 %
seamstress / tailor	1.9 %
jeweler	.7 %
laundry / dry cleaner	.6 %
travel	.4 %
hair stylist	.1 %
florist	.1 %
decorator	.1 %
child care	.1 %

### Construction Trade

welder	1.6 %
construction	1.4 %
carpenter	.9 %
air conditioning	.8 %
electrician	.7 %
upholstery	.4 %
painter / wall paper	.2 %

assistant (general)	.1 %
plumber	.1 %

Manager / Administrator / Professional

accountant / payroll	4.3 %
manager / supervisor	.7 %
lawyer	.7 %
banker	.4 %

Food Preparation / Processing / Distribution

grocery store / supply	1.9 %
food prep / assistant	1.9 %
sacker / packer	.7 %
waiter / waitress	.6 %
cook / baker	.5 %
busboy	.1 %
fast food restaurant	.1 %

Clerical / Administrative Support

clerk	4.0 %
bookkeeping	.5 %
typing / key punch	.4 %
receptionist	.1 %

Labor

maintenance / repair	1.9 %
general manual labor	1.1 %
custodial / cleaning	.7 %
housekeeper / maid	.5 %
landscaper	.4 %
yard keeper	.4 %

Salesperson / Sales Clerk

salesperson / trader	2.5 %
cashier / checker / sale	1.9 %
marketer	.4 %

Motor / Transportation Work

mechanic	2.6 %
auto-body repair	.7 %
driver	.4 %
assistant / helper	.1 %
service station / attendant	.1 %

Health Care / Social Service Practitioners

social / case worker	1.1 %
nurse	.7 %
care taker	.5 %
doctor	.4 %
dentist	.4 %

Education

ESL instructor	1.1 %
teacher	.7 %
teacher's aid / assist	.5 %

Freight Stock and Material Movers

warehouse/ shipping/ receiving/ supply	1.4 %
delivery	.4 %
labor (general)	.1 %

Farming / Fishing / Forestry

fisherman / shrimper	.8 %
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Religious Work

priest / pastor	.4 %
general religious work	.4 %

Science / Research Industries

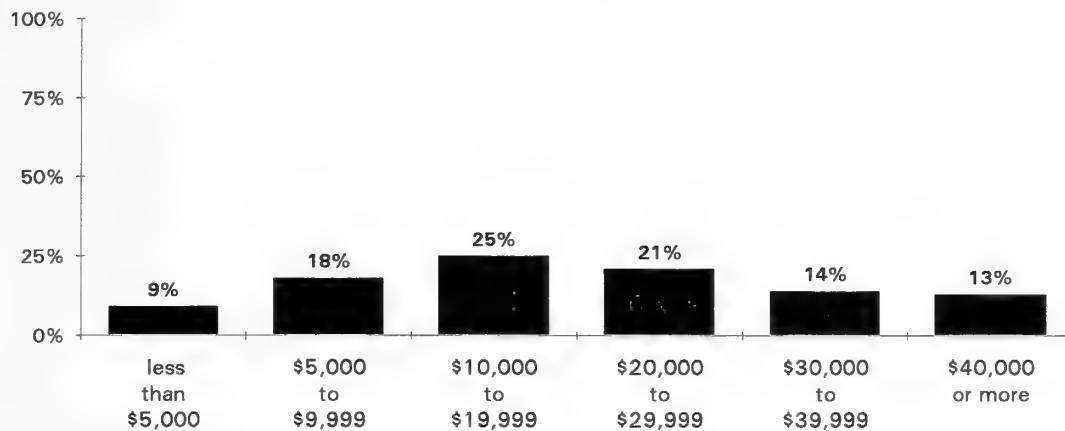
scientist / researcher	.2 %
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Protective Services

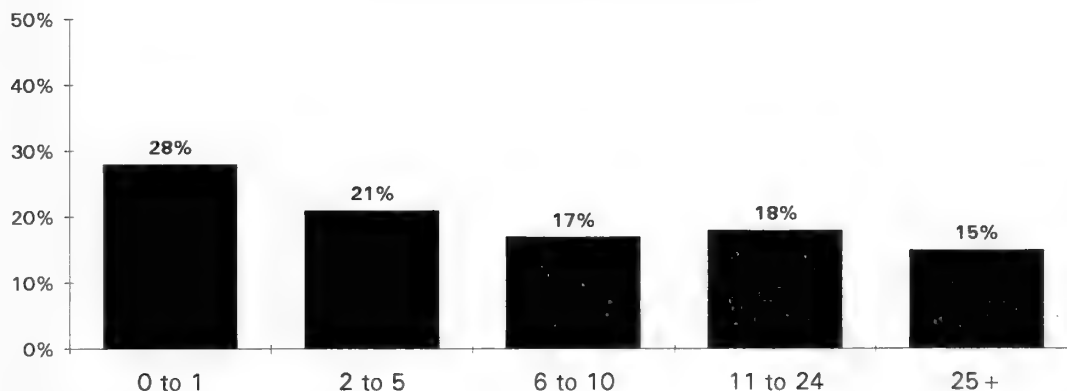
security guard	.1 %
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Miscellaneous

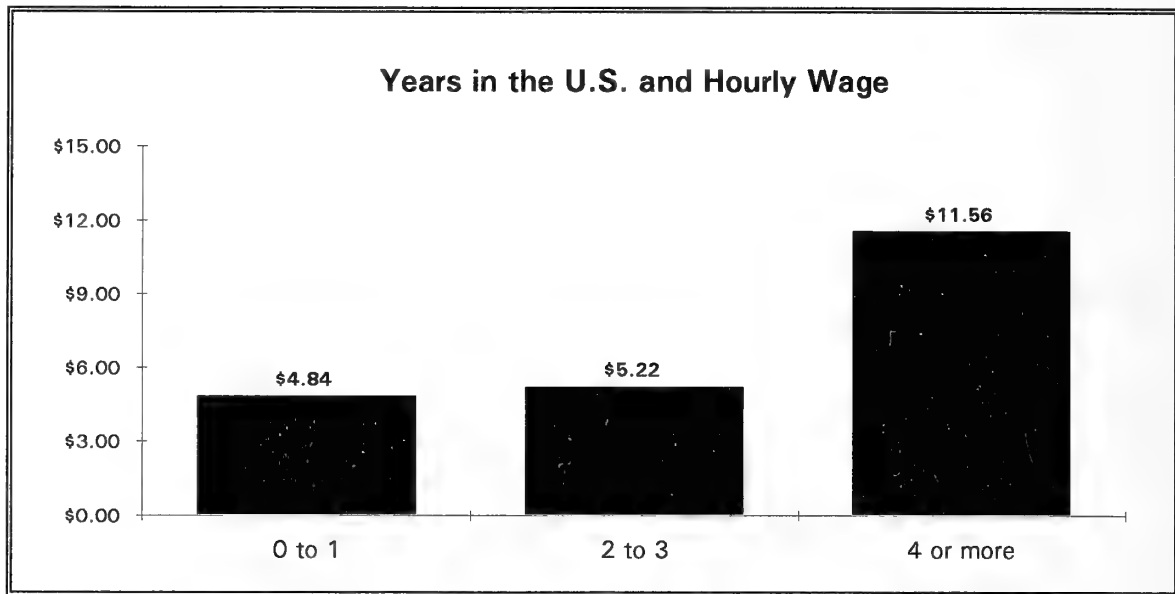
general help	1.1%
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**Average Annual Income**

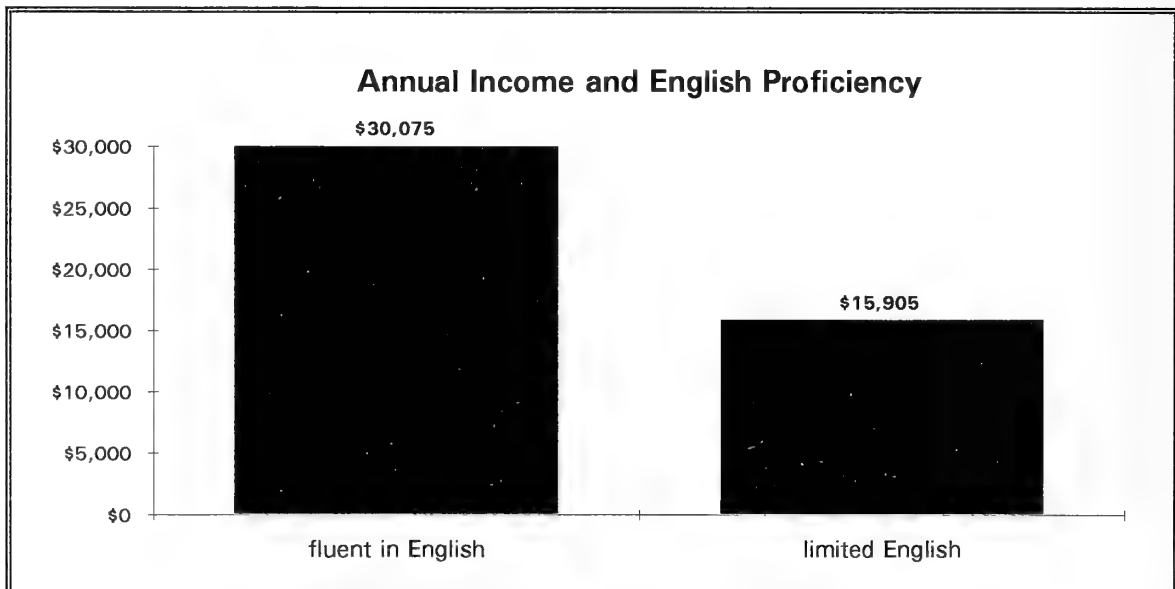
The average annual income of a working Vietnamese refugee was \$21,624 in 1992. Half of working Vietnamese refugees earned more than \$19,000, and half earned less. (Incomes were calculated for Vietnamese refugees arriving in the U.S. before 1992 and earning some income in 1992.)

**Months Before Starting Work in the U.S.  
(those who have worked)**

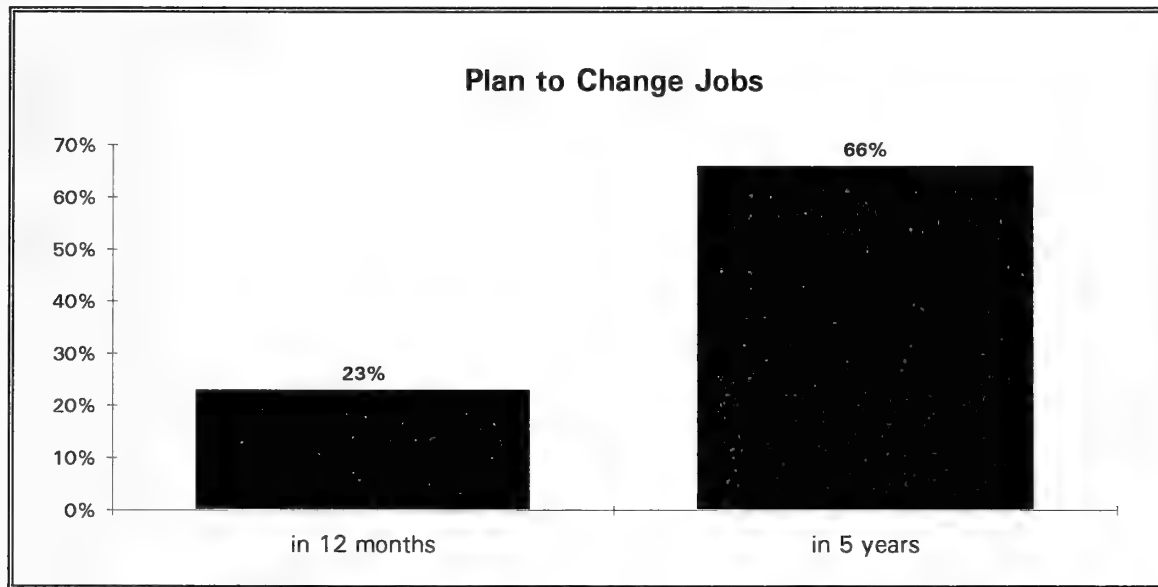
Almost half of Vietnamese refugees (of those who have worked in the U.S.) started their first job within five months of living in the U.S.



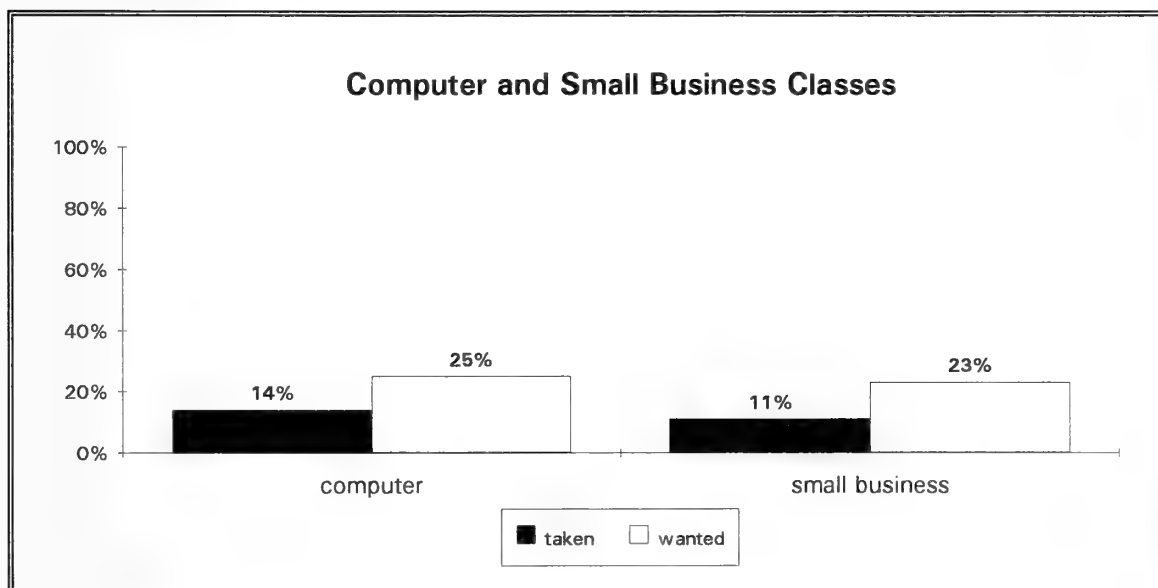
Average wage for Vietnamese refugees remains low in the first few years in the U.S. but increases beyond four years in the U.S. This may be partially explained by higher education levels of Vietnamese refugees arriving in the 1970's.



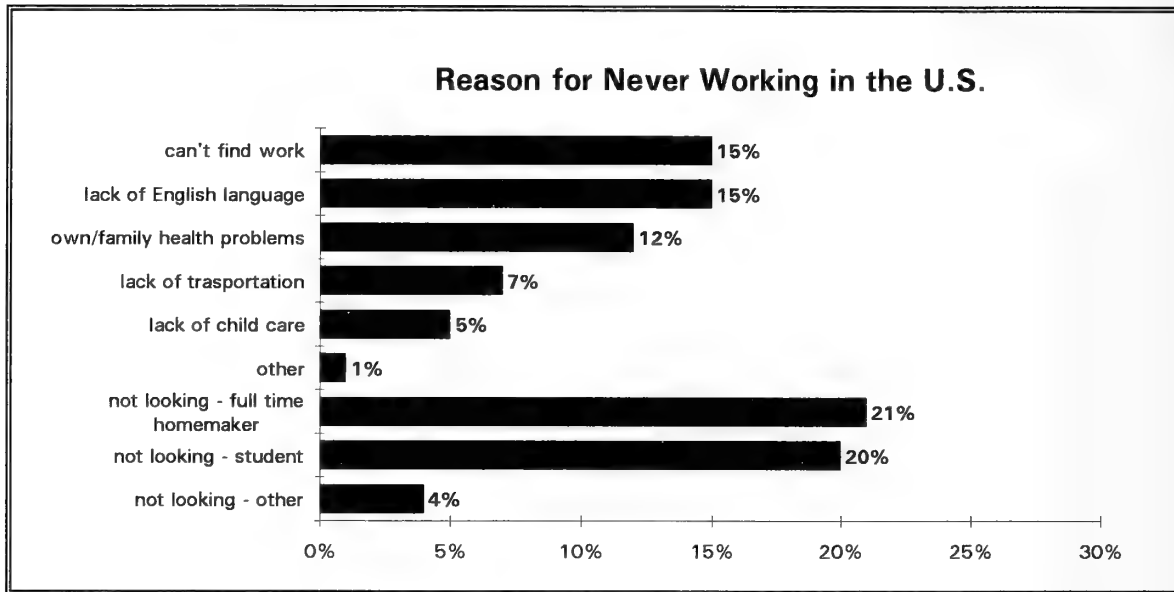
Average annual income increases with English skills. (Incomes were calculated for Vietnamese refugees arriving in the U.S. before 1992 and earning some income in 1992.)



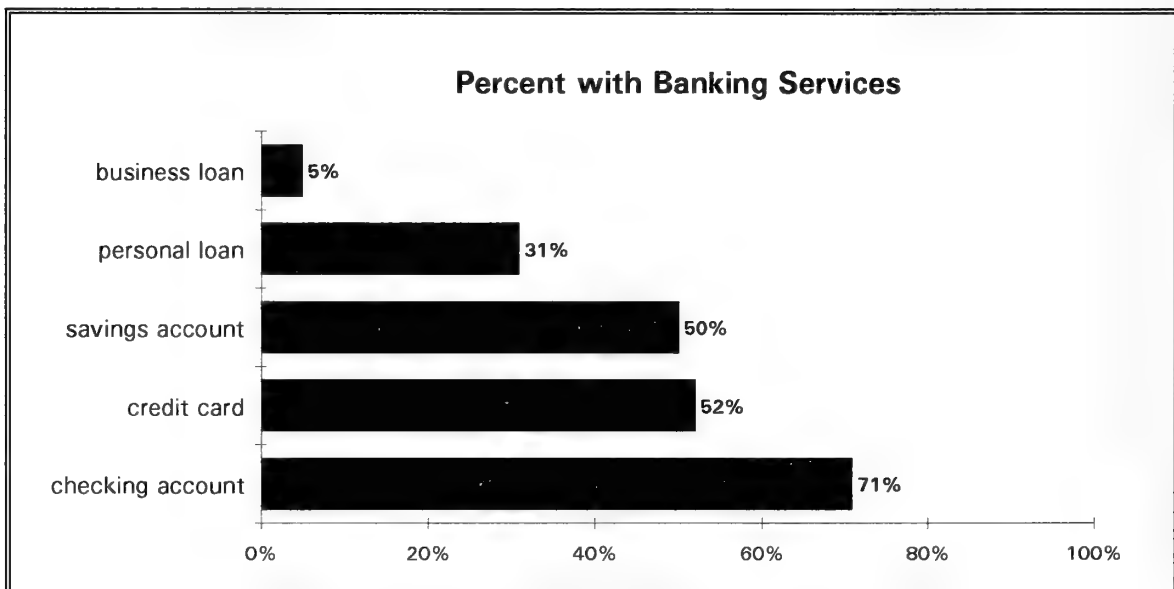
Most working Vietnamese refugees do not plan to change jobs in the next 12 months. However, two-thirds anticipate changing jobs over the next five years.



Fourteen percent of Vietnamese have taken a computer class, and about one-quarter would like to take a computer class. Eleven percent have taken a class in small business, and 23% would like to take one.



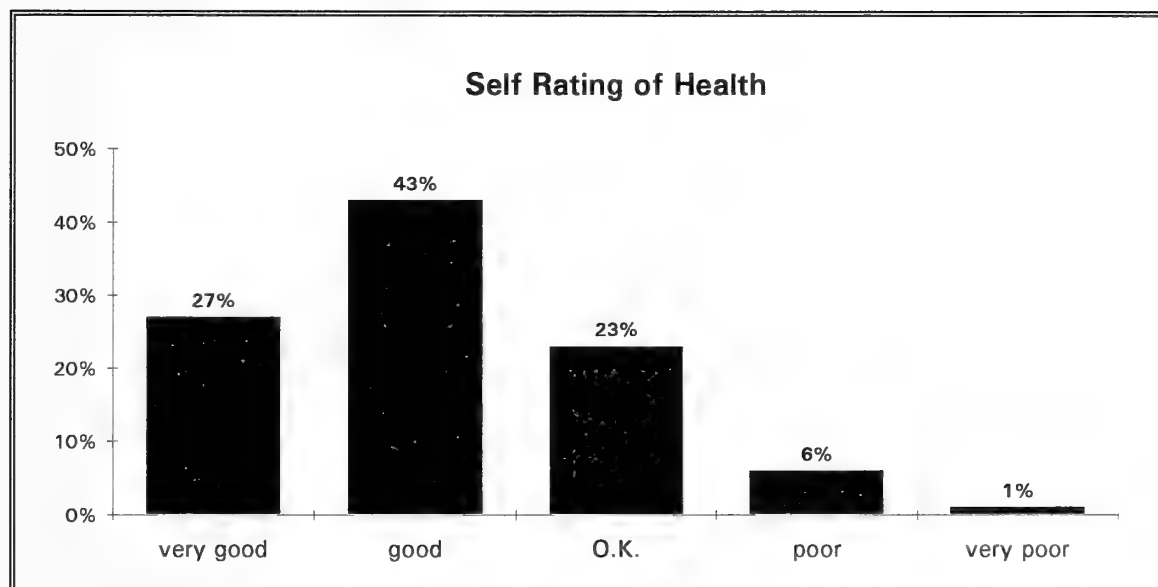
Vietnamese refugees who have not worked in the U.S. cite being a full-time homemaker, being a student, the inability to find work, lack of English, and their own or a family member's health problem as the most important reasons for not working.



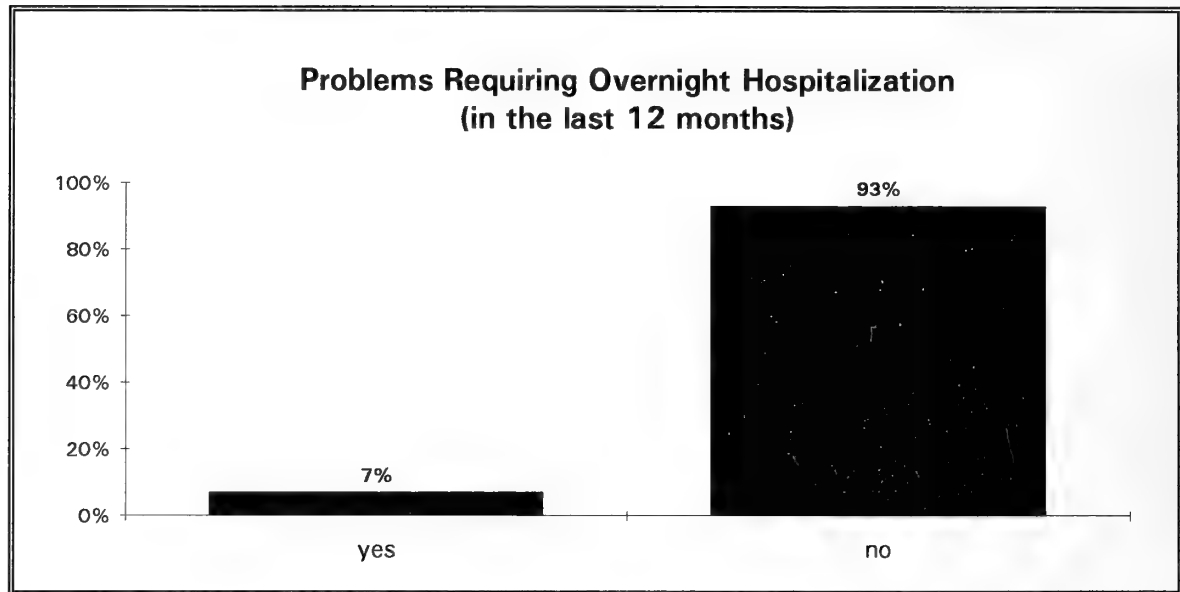
Seventy-one percent of Vietnamese refugees have a checking account, and about half have a savings account and a credit card. About one in three has a personal loan, and 5% have a business loan.



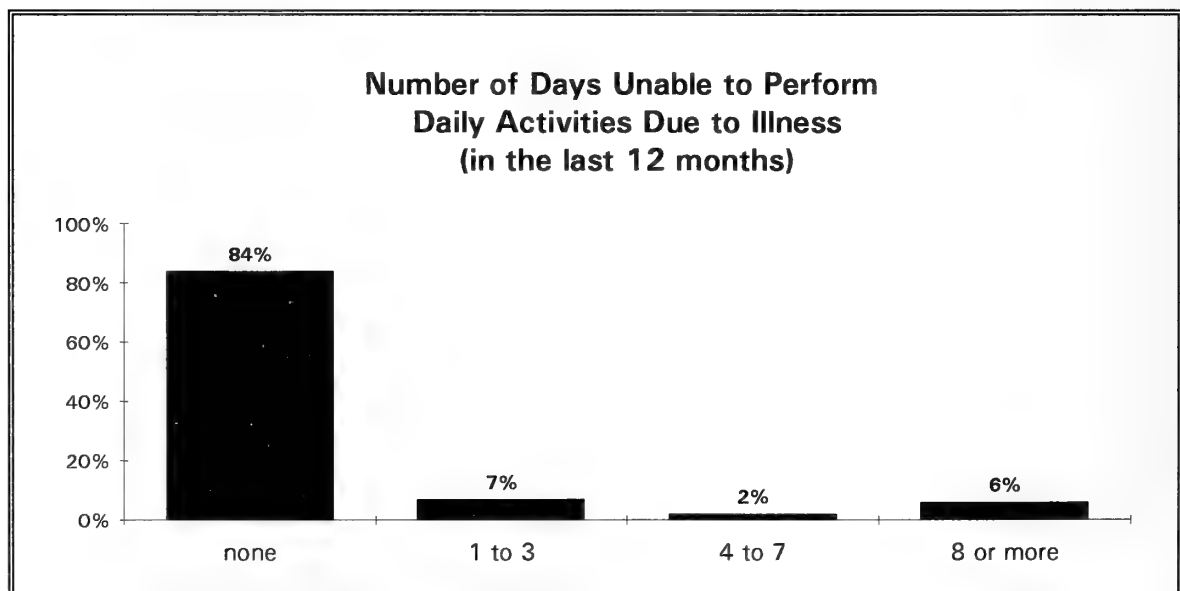
# HEALTH



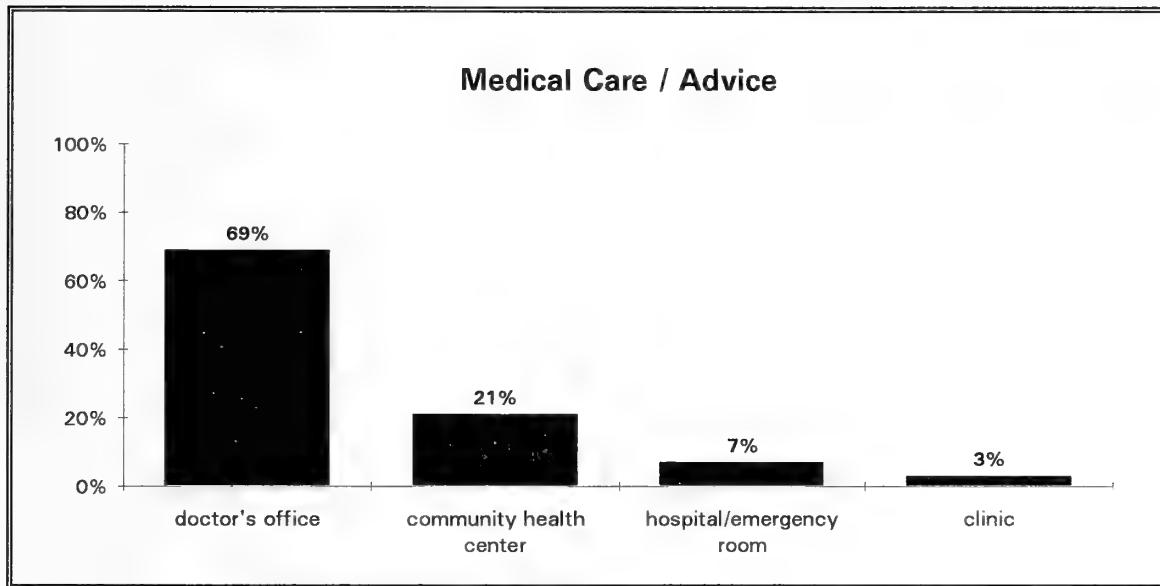
Seventy percent of Vietnamese refugees consider their health to be good or very good, but 7% consider their health to be poor or very poor.



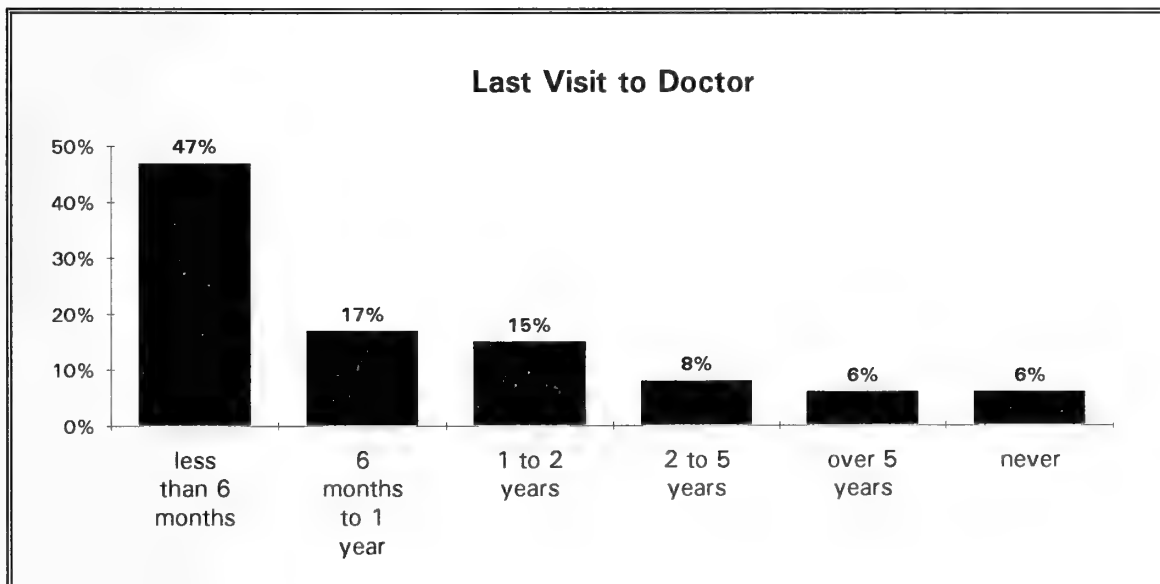
Seven percent of Vietnamese refugees spent at least one night in the hospital during the previous 12 months (includes childbirth).



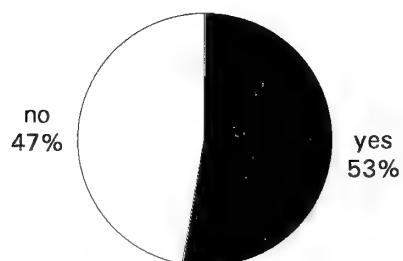
Eighty-four percent of Vietnamese refugees reported they did not miss performing their daily activities in the last 12 months due to illness. However, it is unknown to what extent they work even when feeling ill.



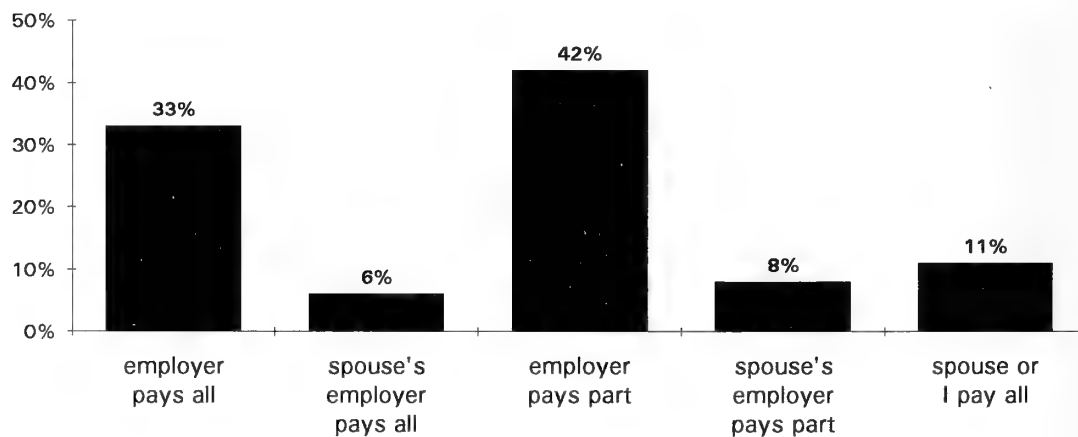
When in need of medical care or advice, most Vietnamese refugees go to a doctor's office.



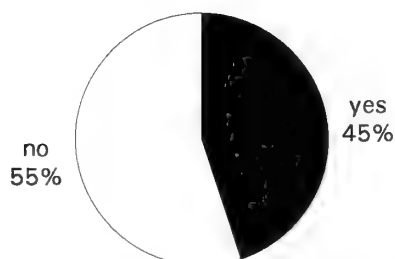
Sixty-four percent of Vietnamese refugees had been to see a doctor in the previous 12 months.

**Private Health Insurance**

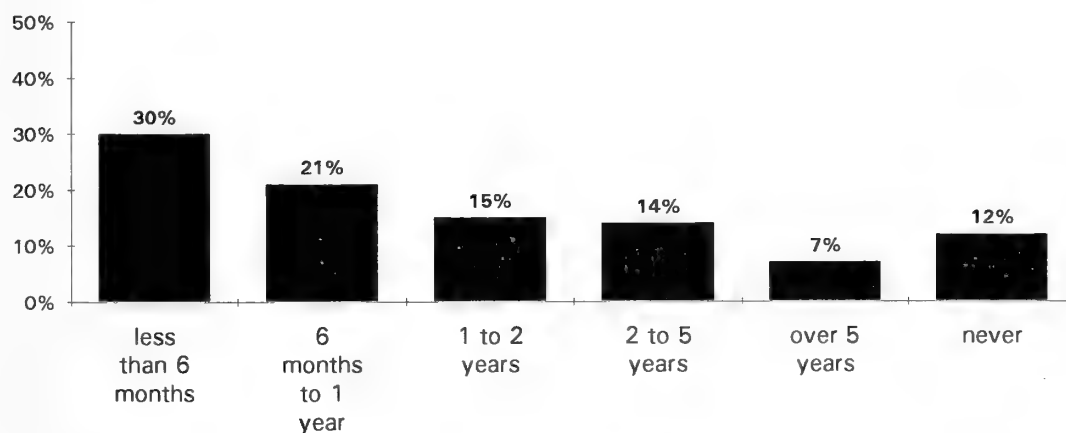
Just over half of Vietnamese refugees reported having private health insurance.

**Payment of Private Health Insurance**

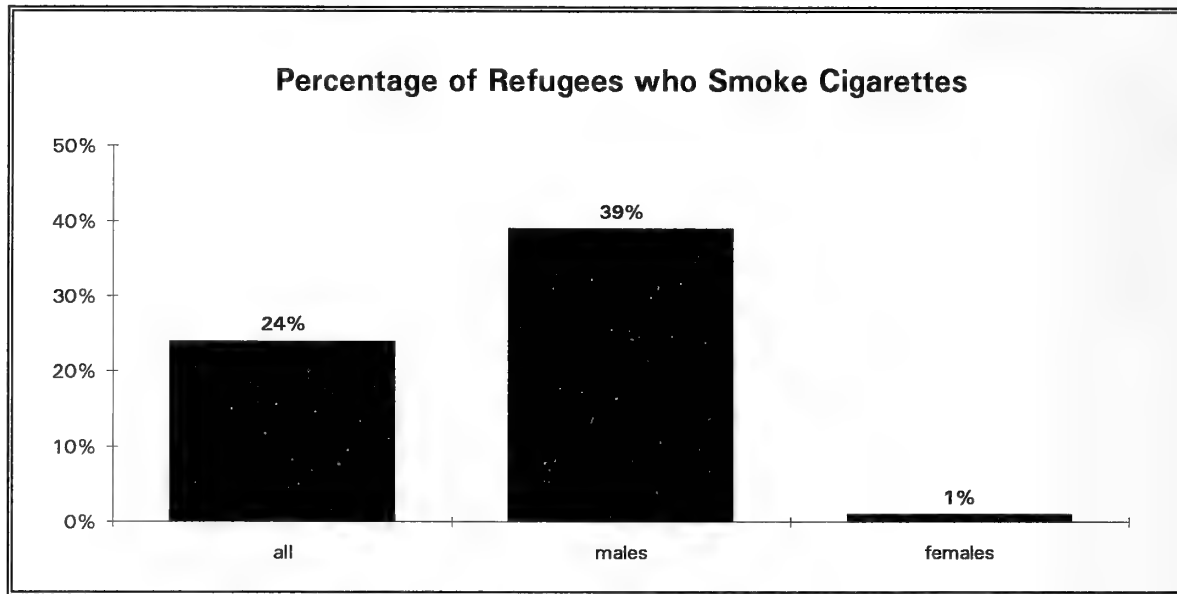
Of those with private insurance, most Vietnamese refugees have employers who pay for part or all of their private health insurance.

**Government Aided Insurance**

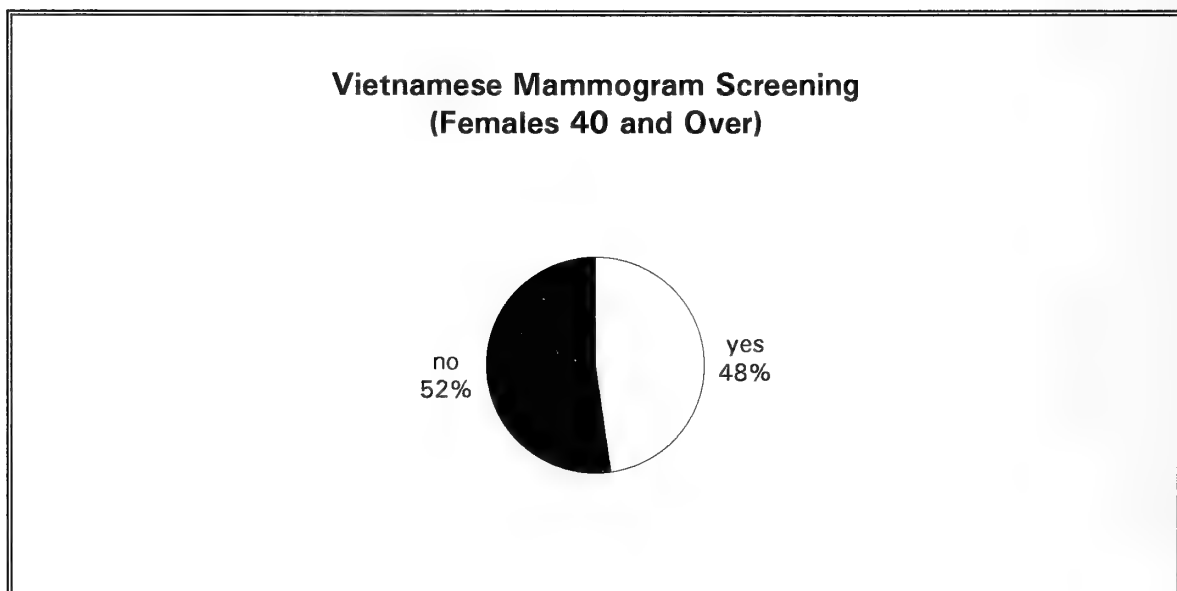
Of the 47% of Vietnamese refugees that do not have private health insurance, 45% have government assisted health insurance such as Medicare, Medicaid, or County Indigent Health Care. However, 26% of all Vietnamese refugees have no health insurance.

**Last U.S. Dentist Visit**

Half of Vietnamese have been to the dentist in the past 12 months, and another 29% have been in the past five years.

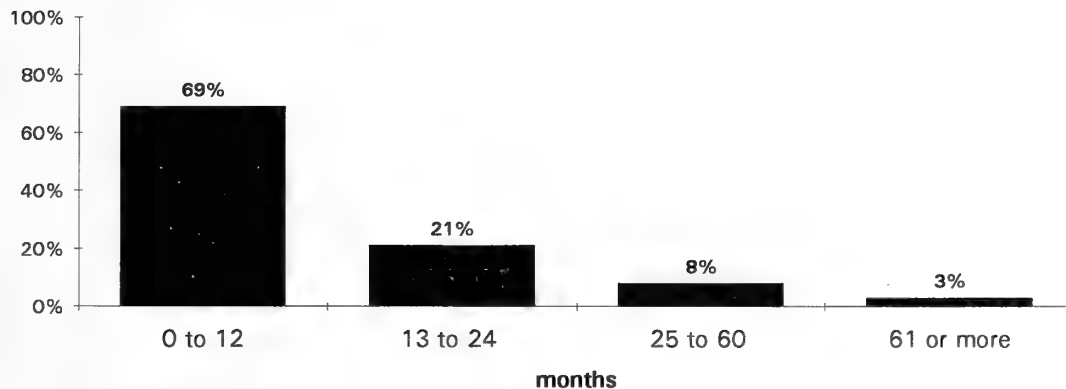


Overall, about the same percentage of Vietnamese refugees smoke as does the general population of Texas. However, Vietnamese females rarely smoke, and a very high percentage of males smoke.



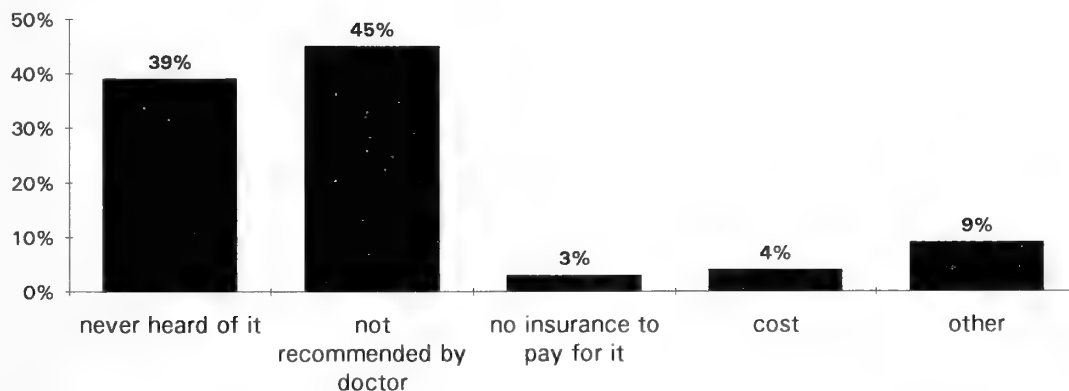
Half of Vietnamese refugee women age 40 and over have had mammogram screenings. This is lower than the rate of Texas women 40 and older, who have had screenings at a rate of 70% (Texas Department of Health).

**Months Since Last Mammogram  
(Females Age 40 and Over who have been Screened)**

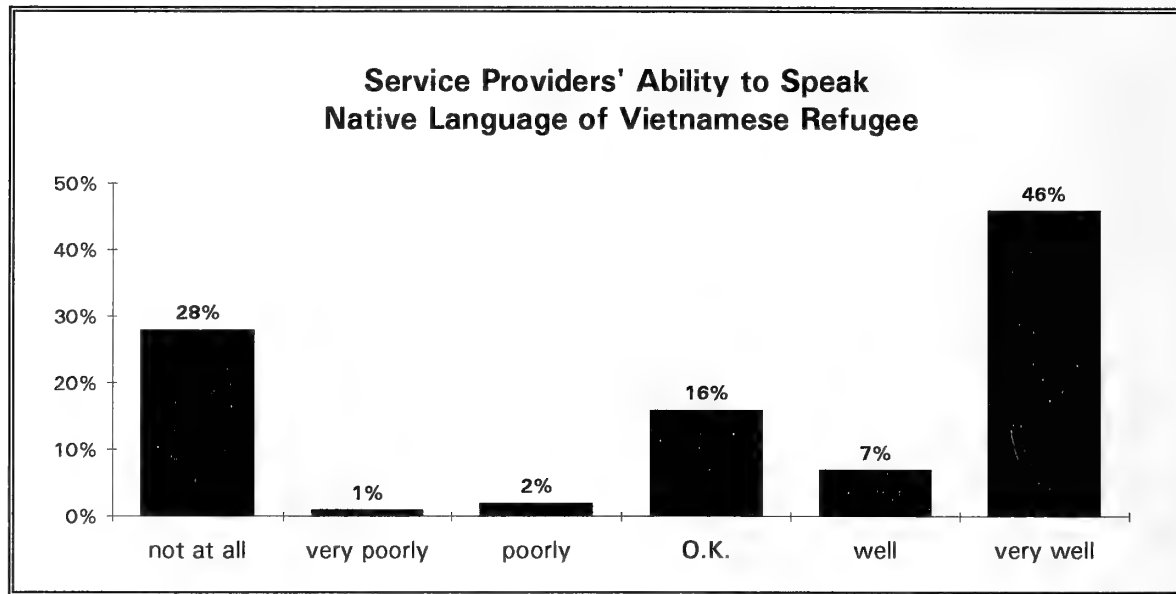


Of Vietnamese refugee women who have had screenings, most had them in the previous 12 months.

**Reasons for Not Having a Mammogram  
(Females Age 40 and Over)**



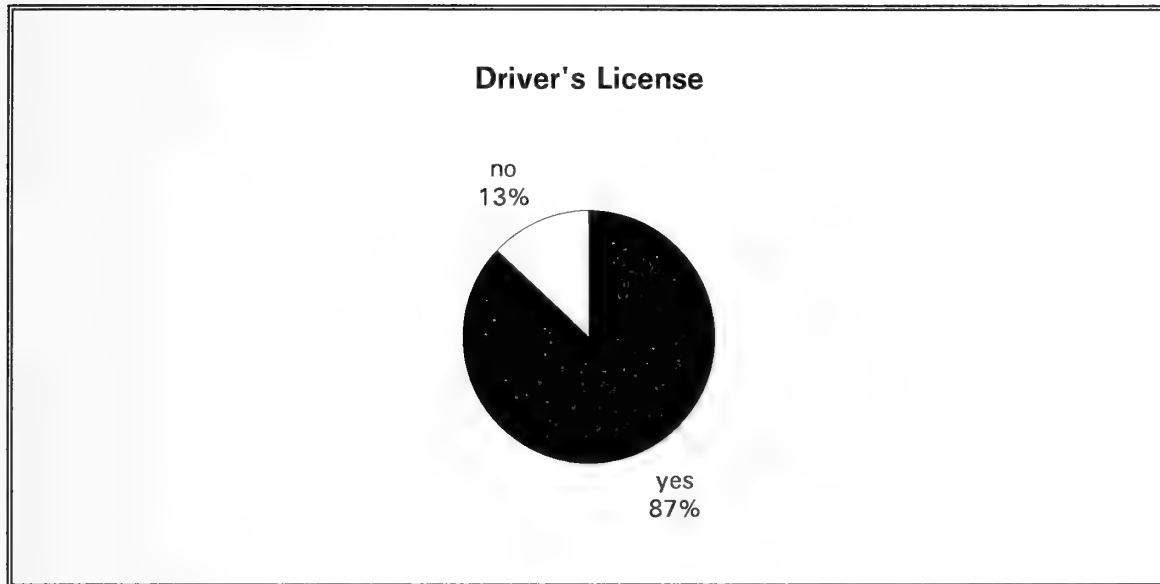
There were two primary reasons Vietnamese women 40 and older hadn't been screened. For 84% of the unscreened women, either they hadn't heard of a mammogram or it wasn't recommended by their doctor.



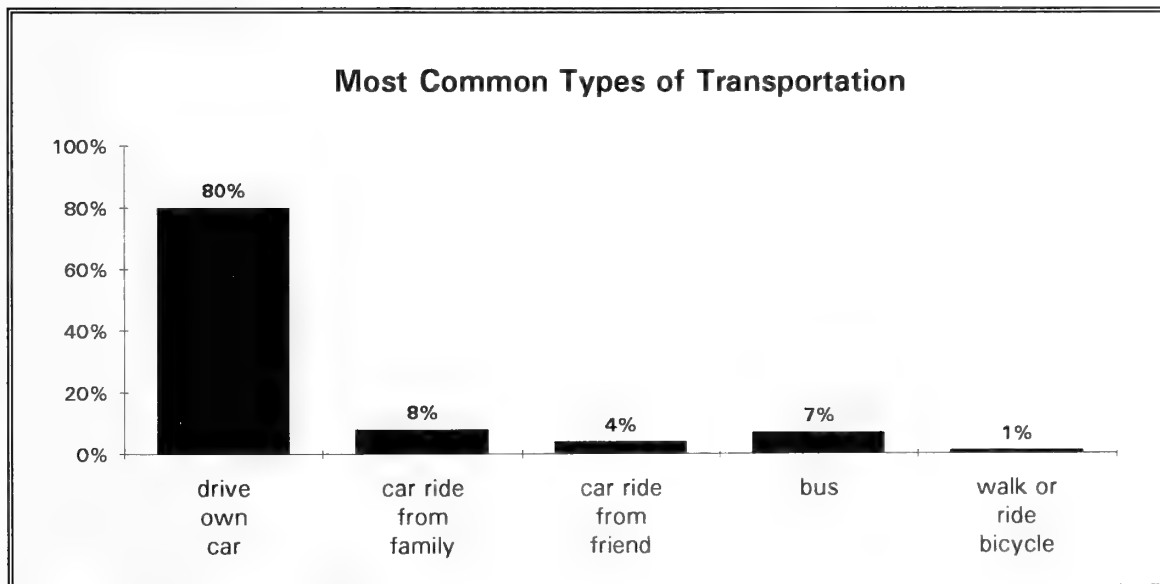
Vietnamese refugees usually find that service providers speak their language very well or not at all.



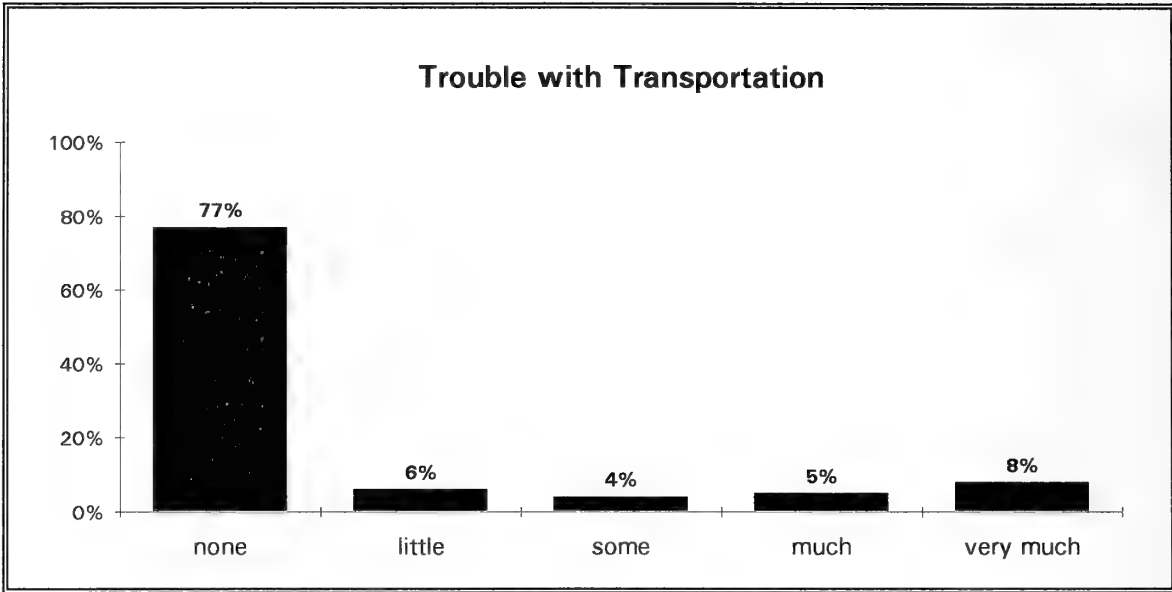
## TRANSPORTATION



Most Vietnamese refugees age 18 and over have a driver's license.



Most Vietnamese refugees drive their own car.



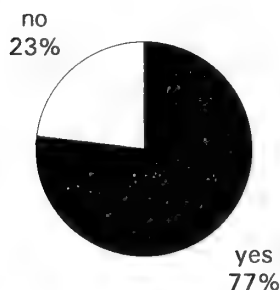
Most Vietnamese refugees do not have a problem with transportation. However, 17% have at least some trouble.



Vietnamese refugees without a driver's license usually don't want to get one.

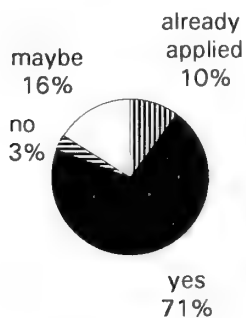
## CITIZENSHIP

### U.S. Citizenship (those who are eligible to apply)



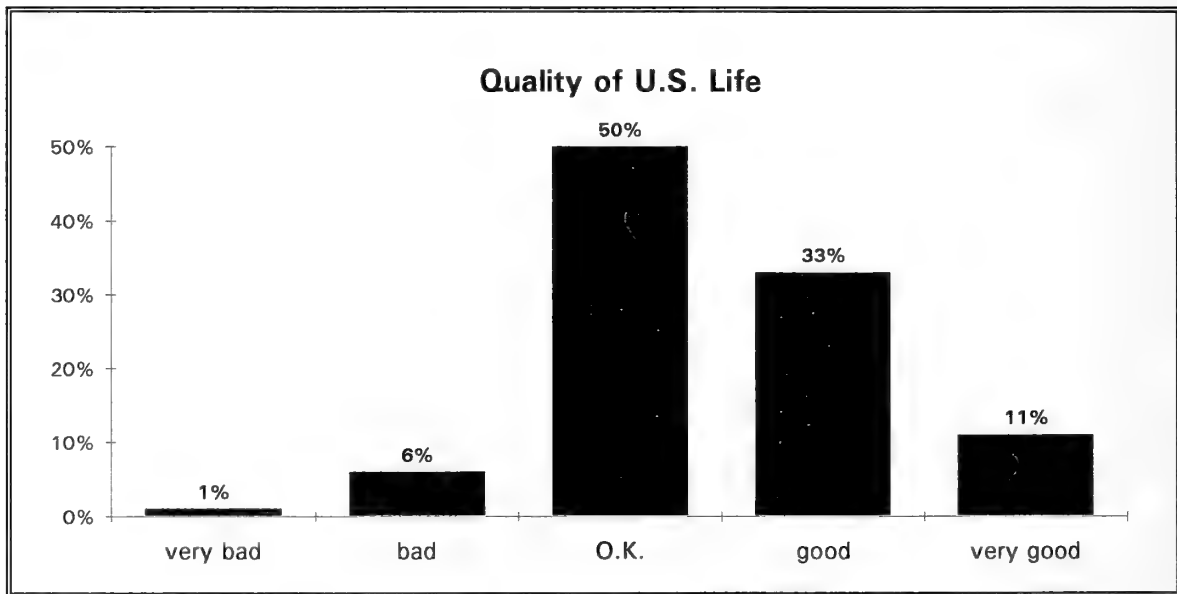
Of those Vietnamese refugees who have been in the U.S. at least five years and are thus eligible to apply for naturalization, 77% have become U.S. citizens.

### Plans to Apply for Citizenship (those who are not currently citizens)



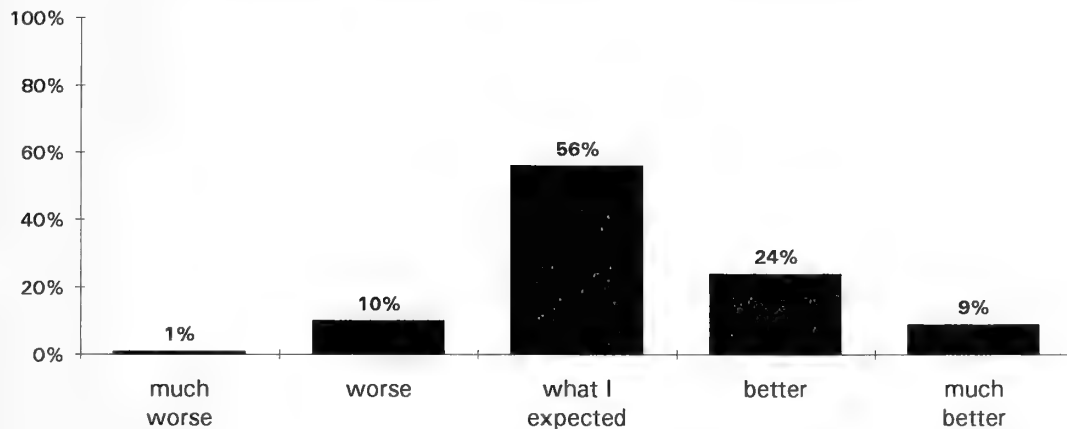
Vietnamese that have not yet naturalized usually plan to do so.

## QUALITY OF LIFE



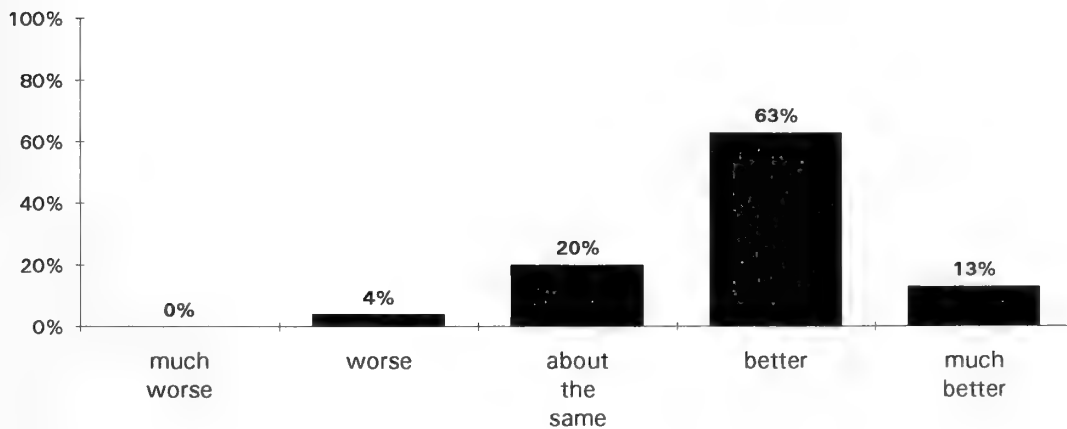
Half of Vietnamese refugees consider their life in the U.S. to be O.K. Another 44% believe their life is good or very good.

Life in the U.S. Compared to Expectations



The majority of Vietnamese believe their life in the U.S. is about what they expected it would be before arriving.

Expectations of U.S. Future



Most Vietnamese refugees expect their lives in the U.S. to get better or much better.









# LAOTIAN REFUGEES

## Interviewer Manager

Khin Thayravanh

## Interviewers

Wing Cam, Paul P. Phongsy,  
Phoutha Phothisane, Khin Thayravanh

243 Interviews Conducted

The resettlement of Laotian refugees in the U.S. and Texas began in 1975 following the departure of U.S. troops from Southeast Asia. Laotians who had supported U.S. activities faced re-education camps, persecution, and death, and many fled their home country for the U.S. U.S. refugee policy has permitted continued immigration of Laotians in an effort to reunite refugees with their family members. In addition to the Laotians resettled in Texas by the State Department, hundreds or thousands of individuals and families have migrated to Texas from other states. This migration occurred, in part, due to the lure of Texas' oil and fishing industry in the 1980's and also because of Texas' warm climate.

The exact number of Laotians in Texas is unknown. Using U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement information about resettlement, and limited migration information, we estimate that 7,000 to 12,000 Laotian refugees live in the state. This number does not include the Laotian-Americans who were born in the U.S. Including these citizens, we estimate that 15,000 to 25,000 Laotians live in Texas, and this number continues to grow.



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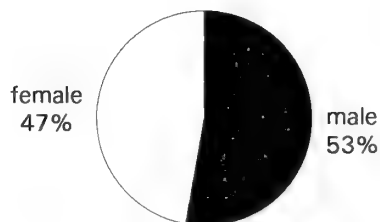
## Laotian Refugees

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## DEMOGRAPHICS

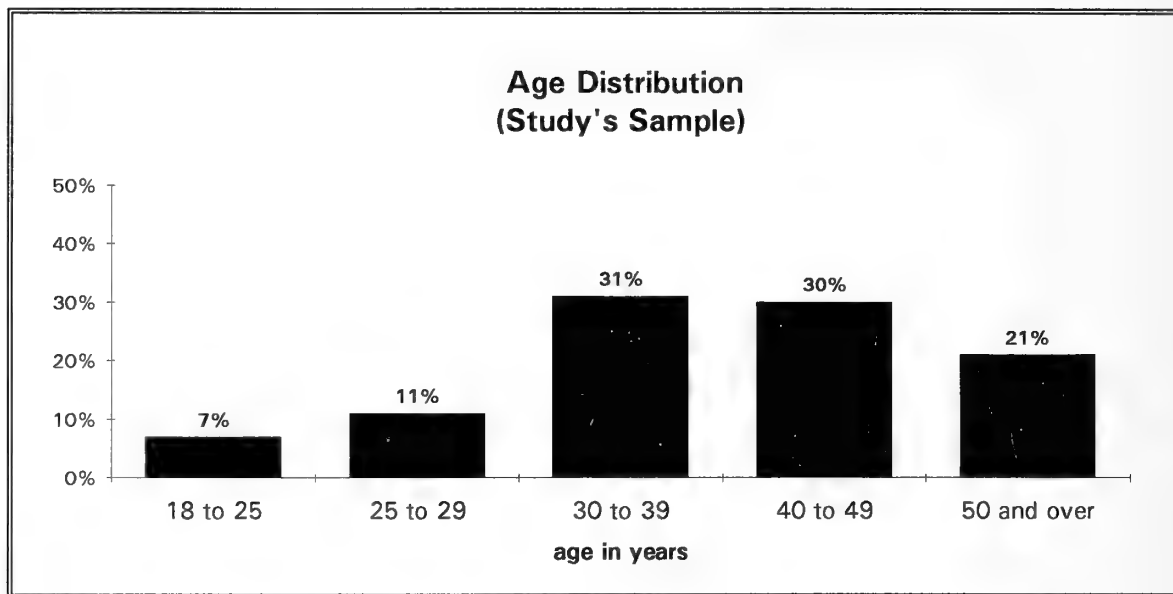
**Distribution of Males and Females  
(U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement)**



According to the U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement, slightly more male Laotian refugees have resettled in Texas than females. The study's sample reflects a ratio of males to females very similar to that of Texas' Laotian refugees.

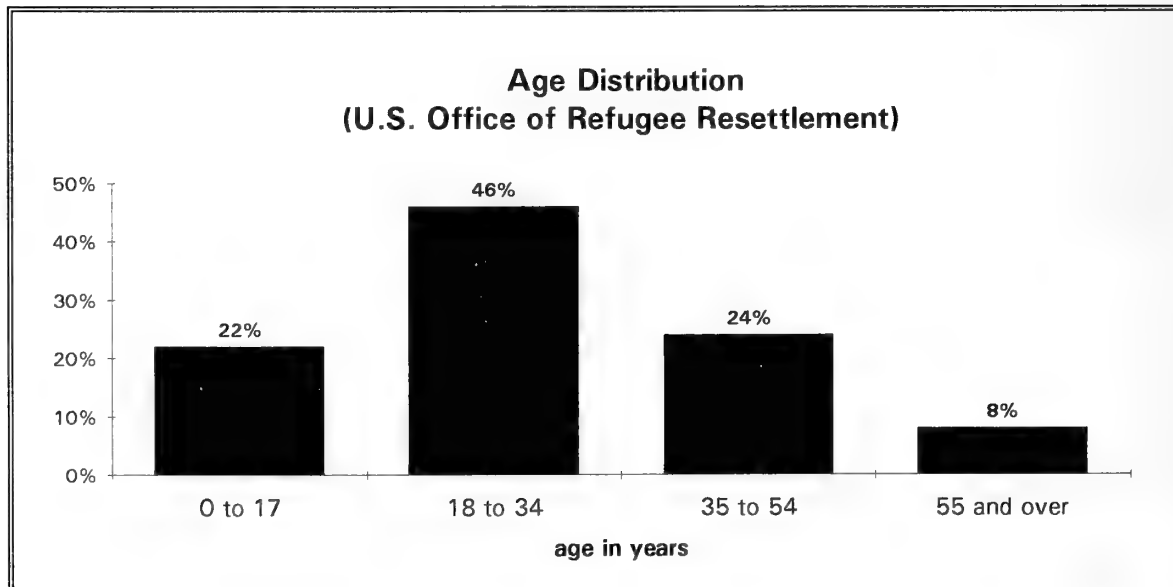
**Distribution of Males and Females  
(Study's Sample)**

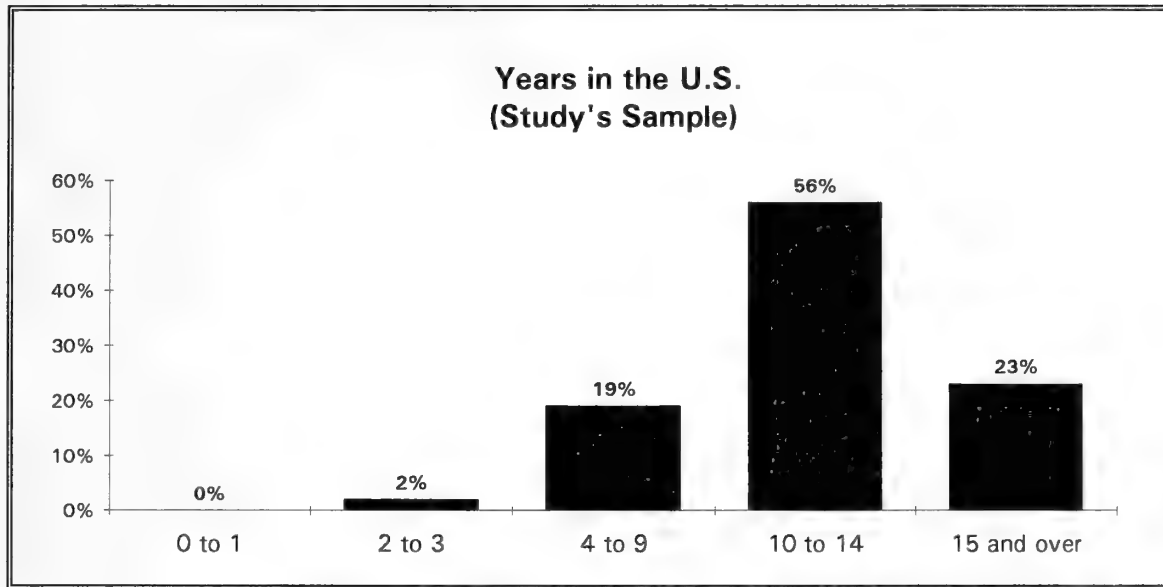




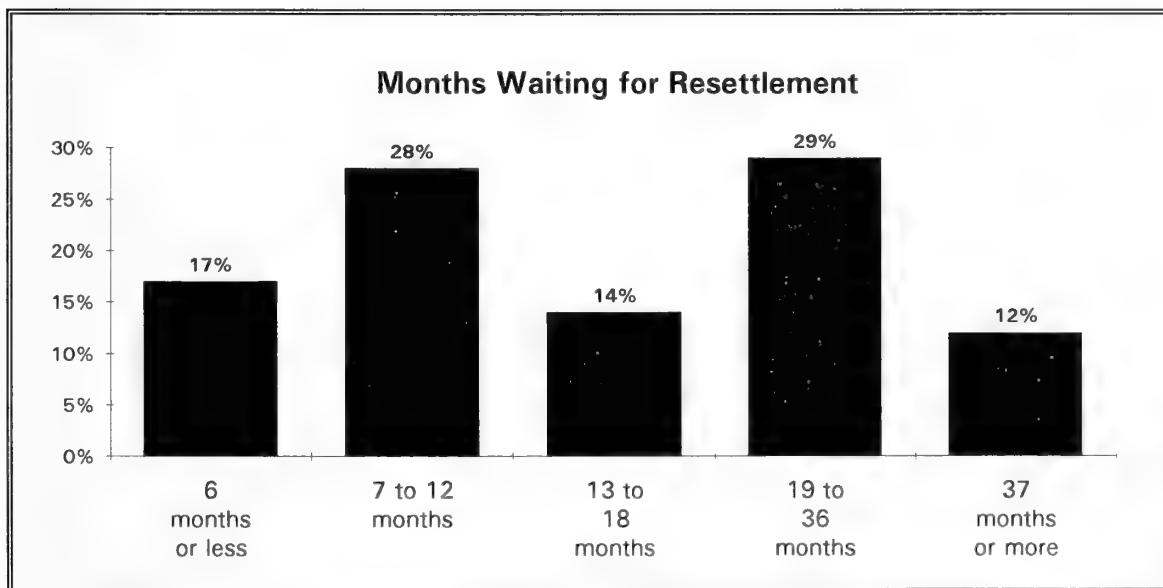
As seen above, the vast majority of Laotian refugees in the study (72%) were between the ages of 25 and 49. However, about one-fifth of the interviewees were ages 50 and older. The average age of the Laotian refugee in the study was 40 years.

To participate in the study a refugee had to be at least 18 years of age. However, as seen below, approximately 22% of Laotian refugees are ages 17 and younger. Additionally, there is a large population of Laotians ages 0 to 19 who were born in the United States to Laotian refugee parents. These children are U.S. citizens because of their birth here and are not officially considered refugees. These citizens are not reflected in the Texas Refugee Study or the U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement's age statistics shown below.

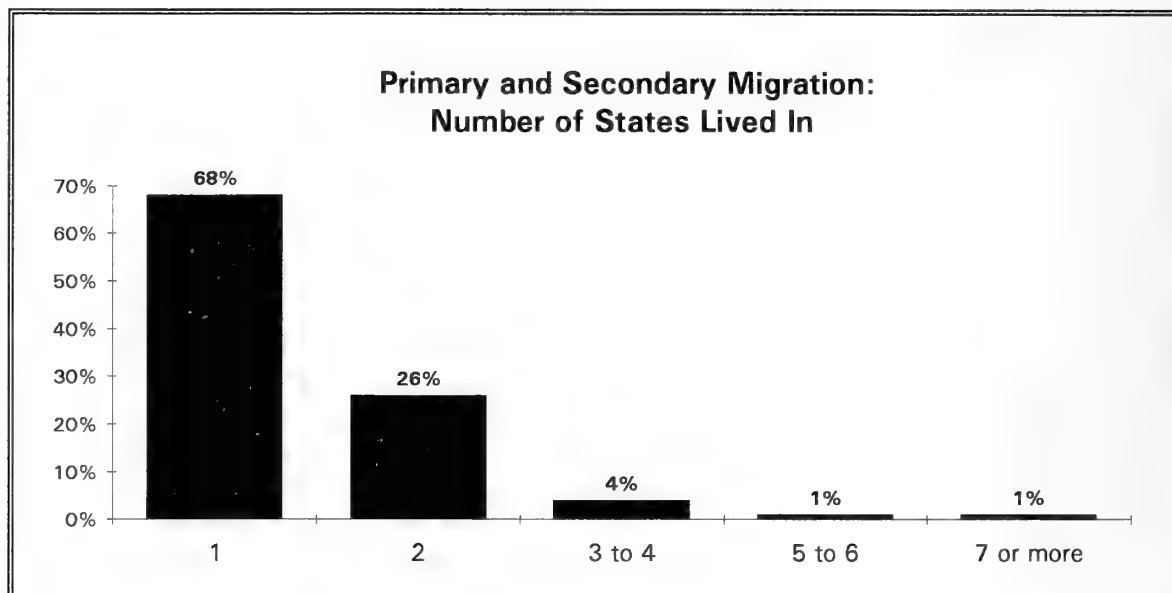




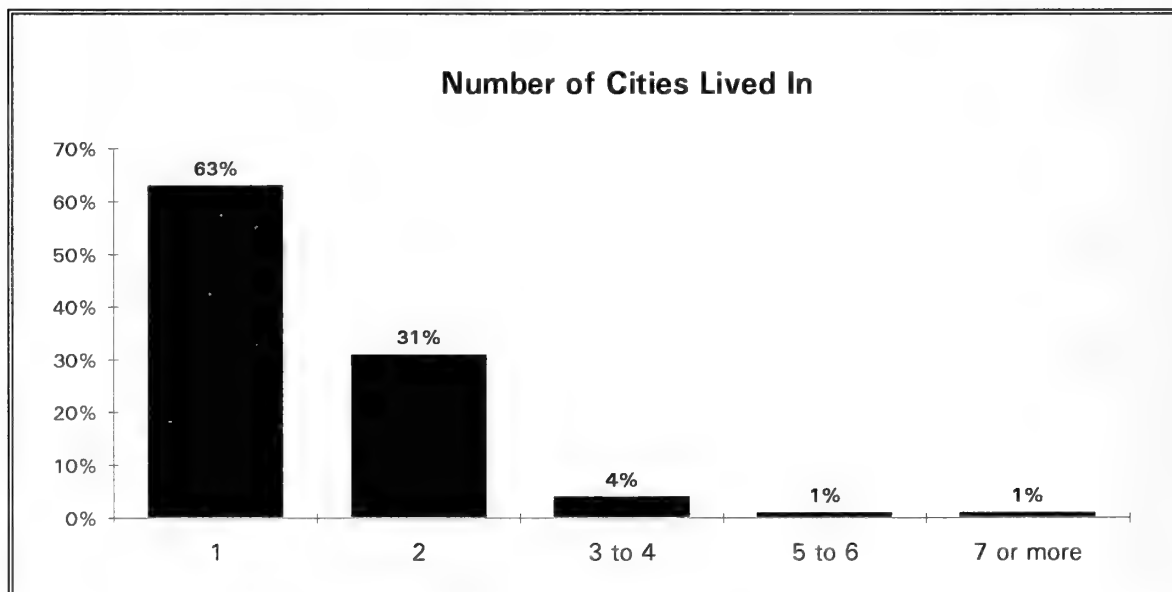
The majority of Laotians in the study (56%) arrived in the U.S. between 1979 and 1983 (the study was conducted in 1993). Almost a quarter of the participants came to the U.S. in 1978 or before, and nearly as many arrived in 1984 or after. However, as seen below, most would have arrived earlier had they not been detained in holding camps.



Almost all Laotian refugees had to wait in holding camps before resettling in the U.S. On average they waited 22 months, and 37% remained in camps for at least two years before coming to the U.S.

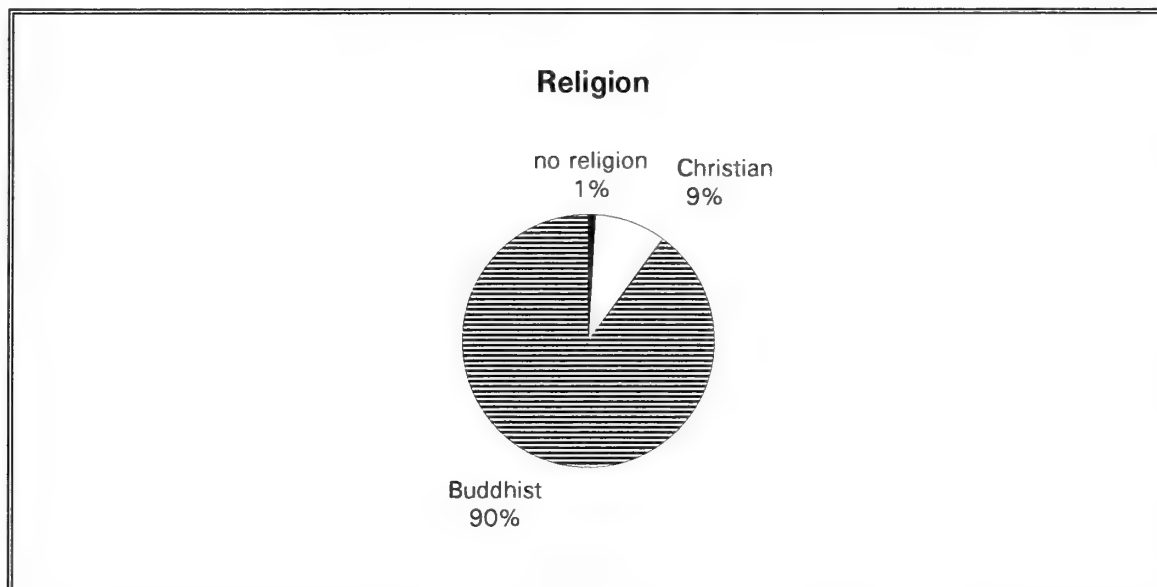


Texas has been the only state of residence for about two-thirds of Texas' Laotian refugees. However, one-third migrated to Texas from another state, and 6% have lived in at least three different states.



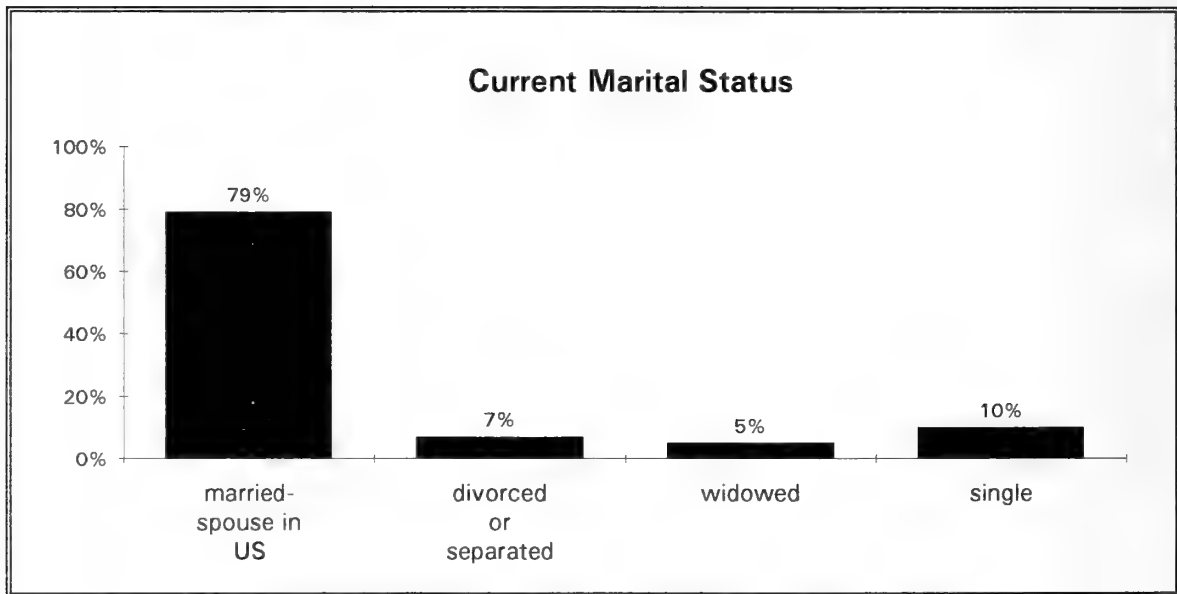
Most Laotian refugees in the study (conducted in Houston) originally resettled in Houston and have not lived in any other U.S. city. However, 37% have lived in a U.S. city other than Houston.



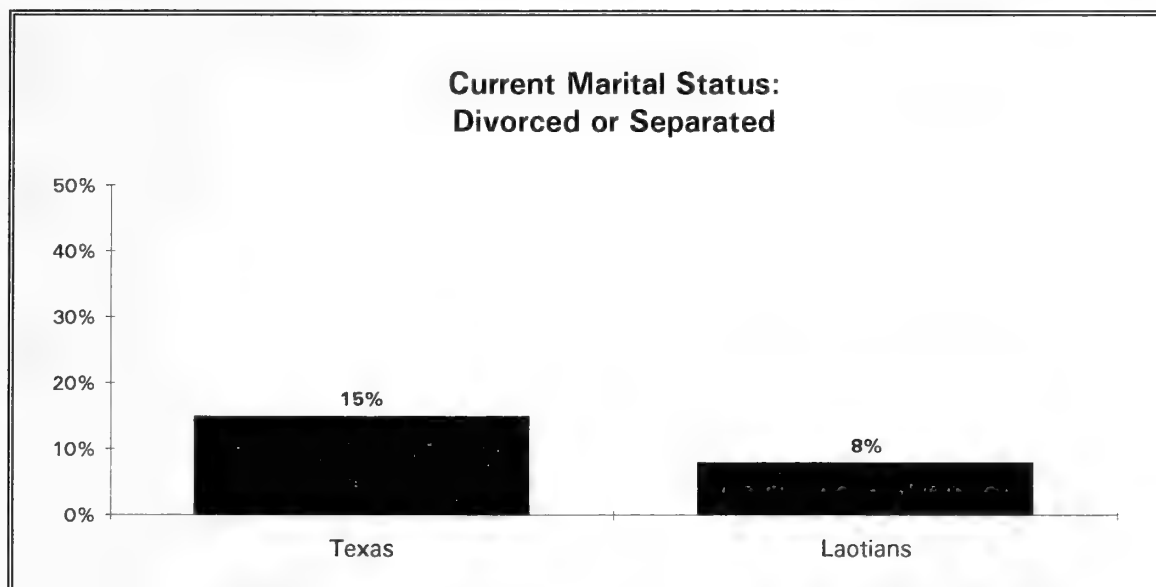


Almost all Laotian refugees are religious, and 90% consider themselves Buddhist. (Only religions named by at least 2% of interviewees were included.)

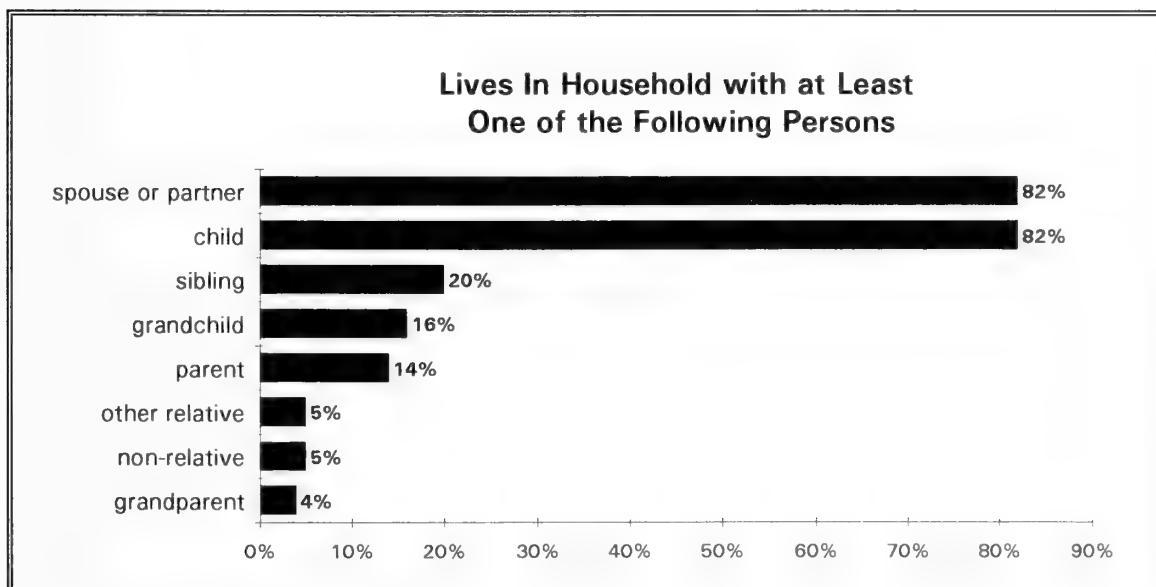
## FAMILY & HOUSEHOLD



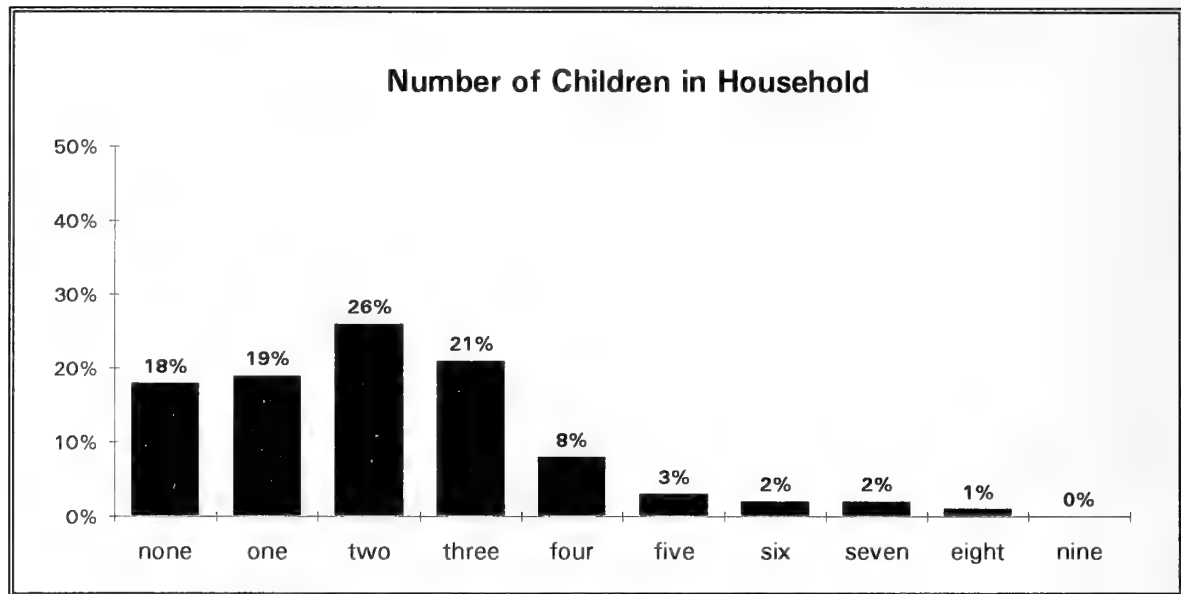
Most Laotians are currently married, and 5% are widowed. One in ten remains single, and 7% are currently divorced or separated from their spouse.



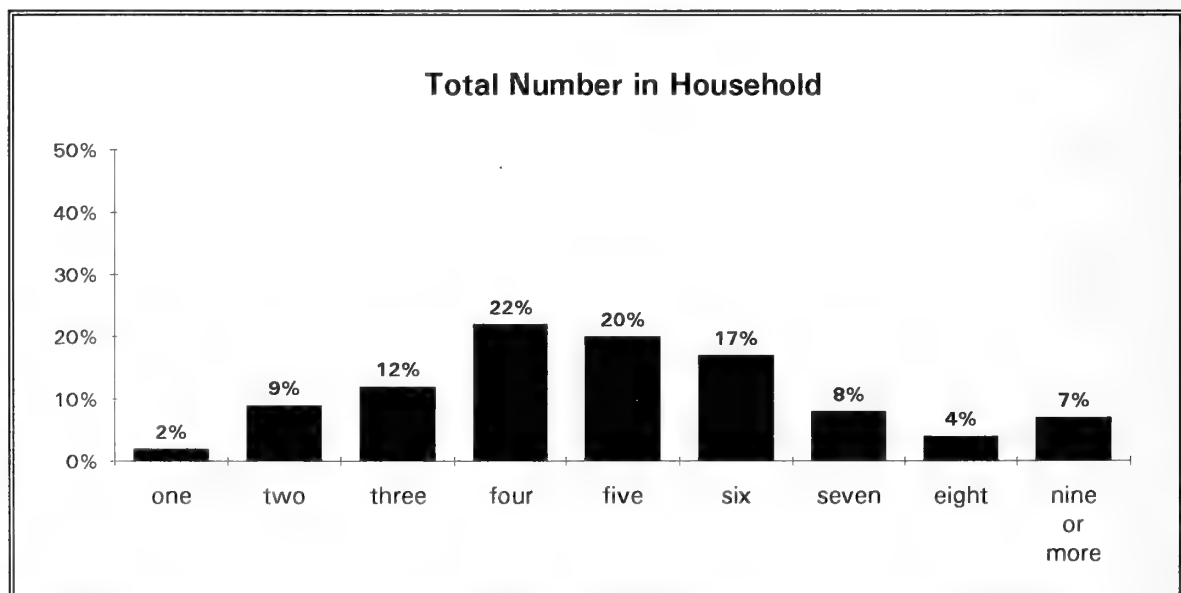
In considering individuals who have been married, Laotian refugees are divorced or separated at about half the rate of Texas' overall population. Texans (according to 1990 U.S. Census) and Laotians (Texas Refugee Study) indicate their current marital status as divorced or separated at the percentages shown above. These calculations represent the percentage of individuals whose current marital status is either divorced or separated. Divorced individuals who are currently re-married are not represented in these percentages.



Most Laotian refugees live with their spouse and at least one child. Living with a sibling, grandchild, or parent is also common.

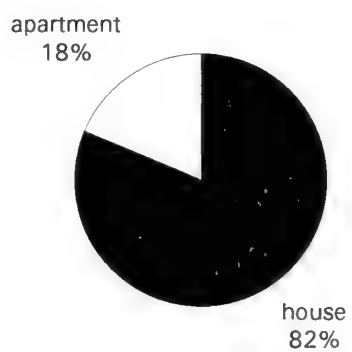


Most Laotians live in a household with children. On average there are more than two children in each household, and living with one, two, or three children is very common.



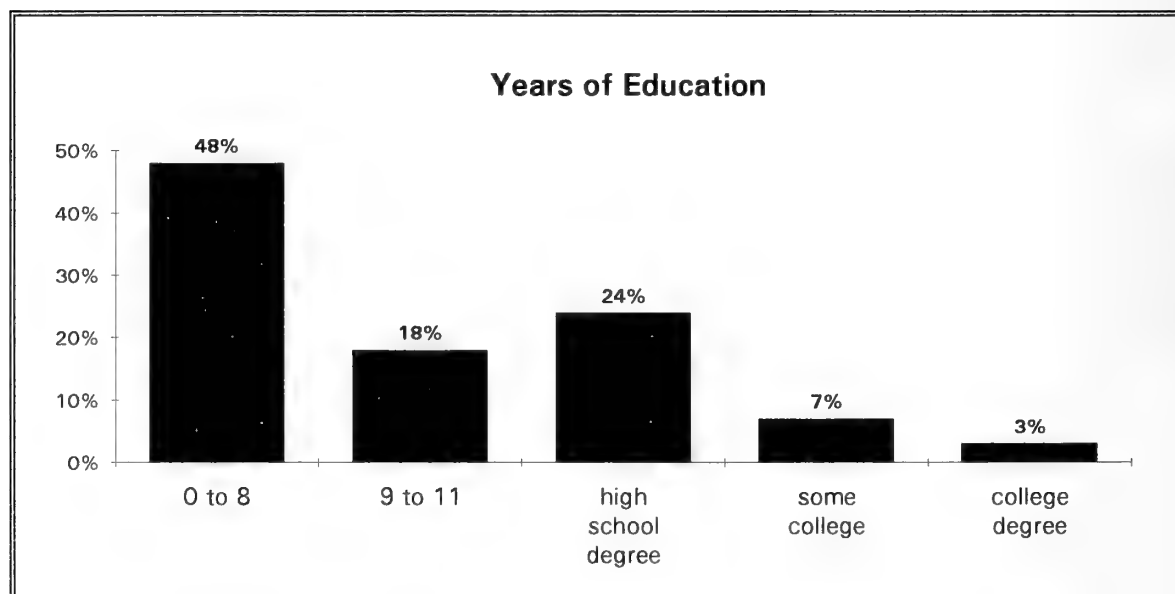
The average number of people in a Laotian household is five, and household sizes of four, five, and six are most typical. Only 2% of Laotian refugees live by themselves, and 7% live with nine or more people.

Type of Dwelling

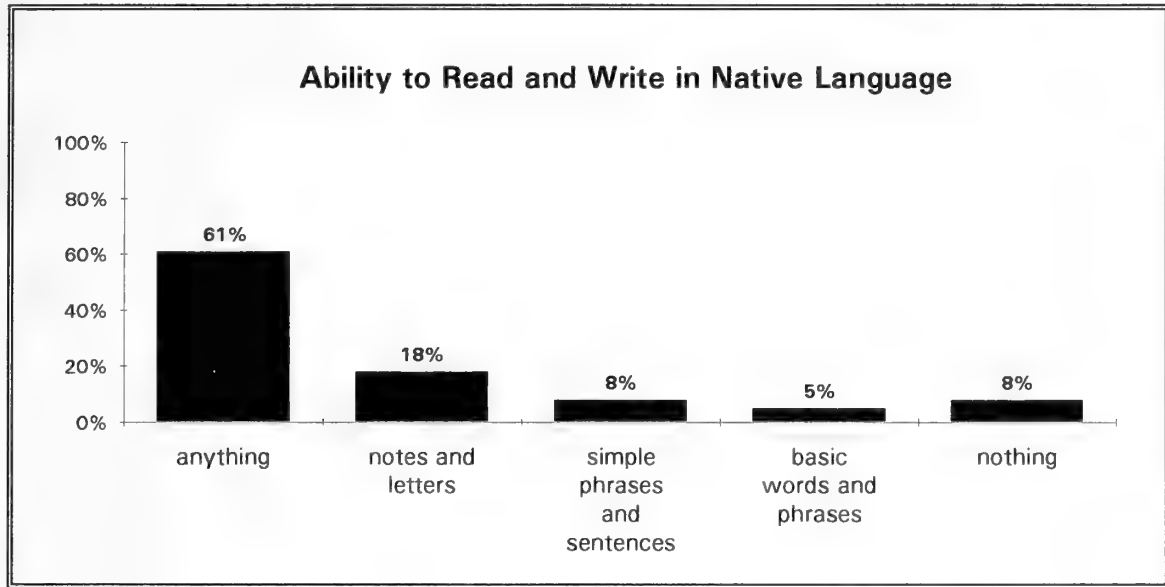


Most Laotian refugees live in a house.

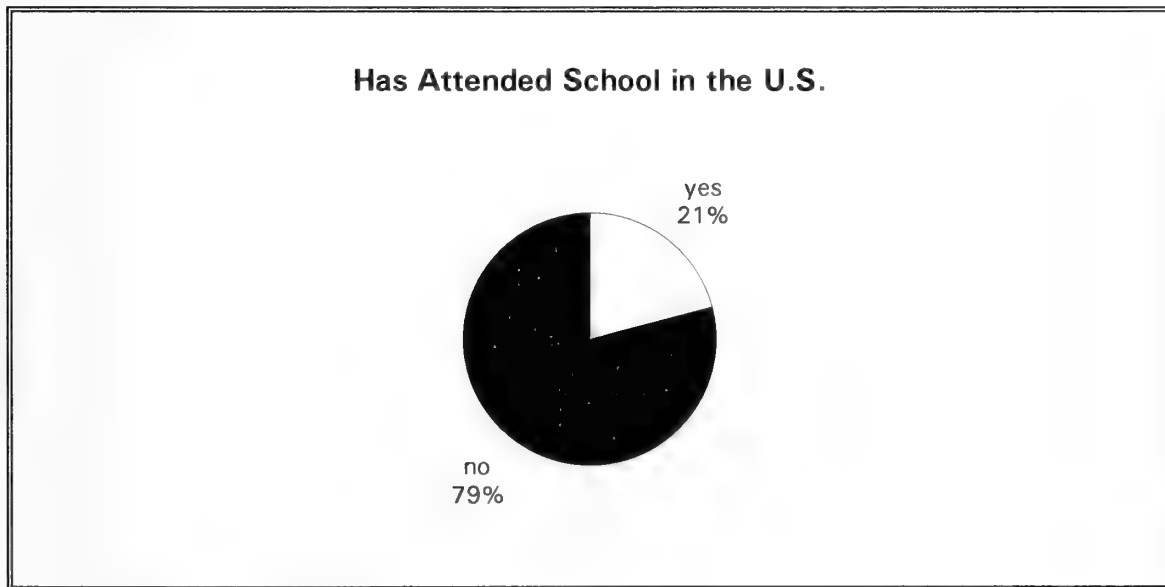
## EDUCATION & ENGLISH



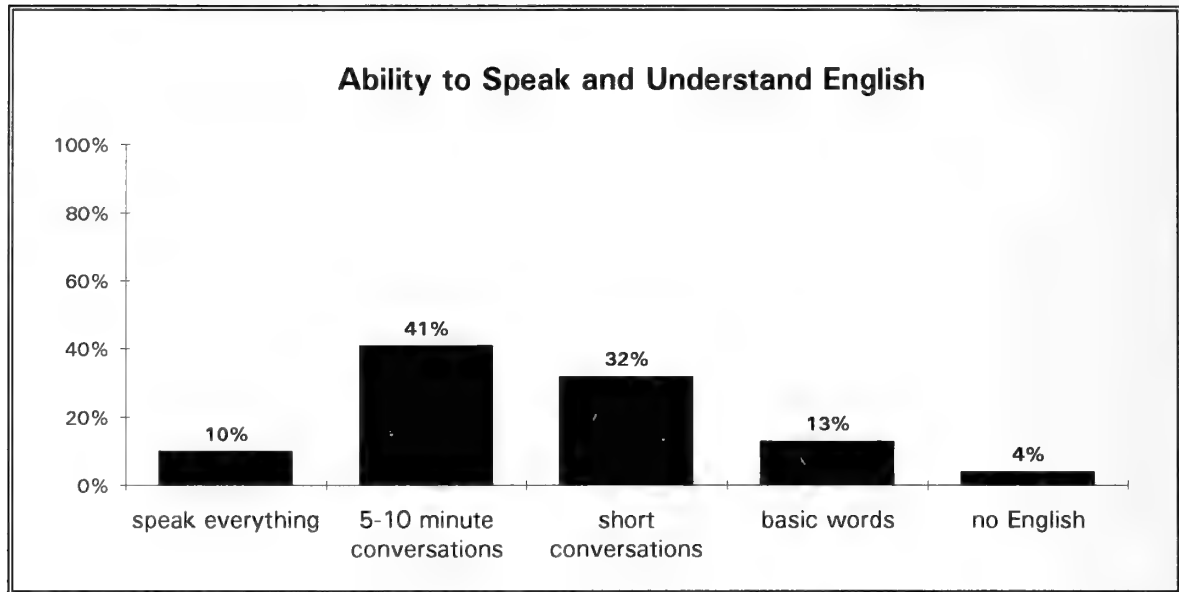
Laotian refugees' educational levels are quite varied. Almost half have an 8th grade education or less, about one in four have a high school education, and 10% have been to college. (Educational level includes schooling before and after arriving in the U.S.) Laotian refugees average eight and a half years of education.



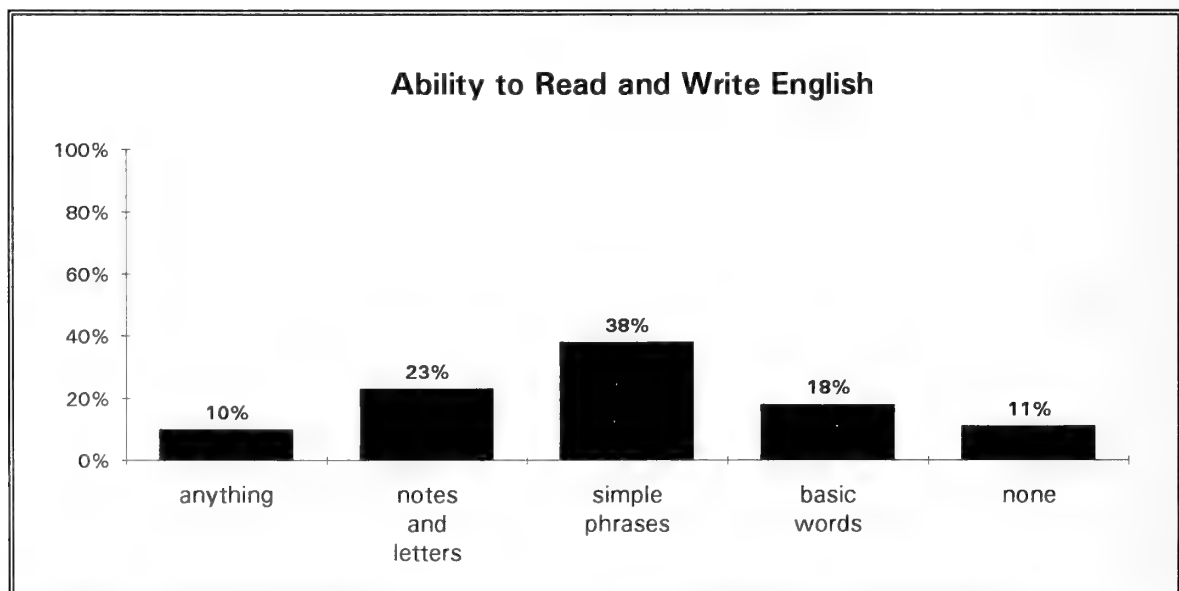
Most Laotians are able to read and write in their native language.



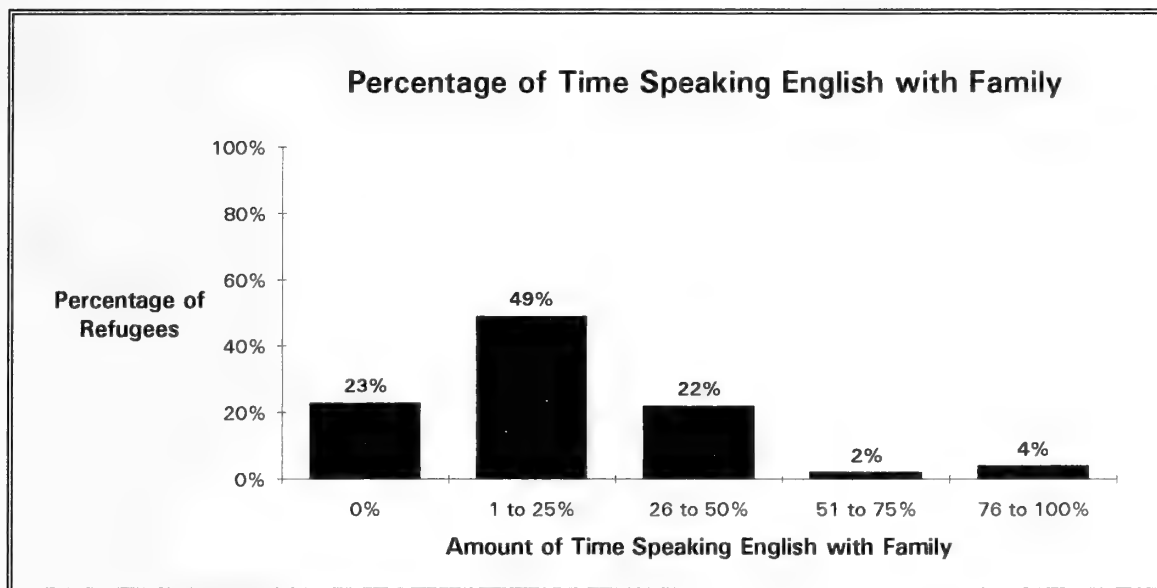
Laotian refugees typically received their formal education before coming to the U.S. U.S. citizen children of these refugees, not represented in the above information, are typically receiving their education in Texas public or private schools.



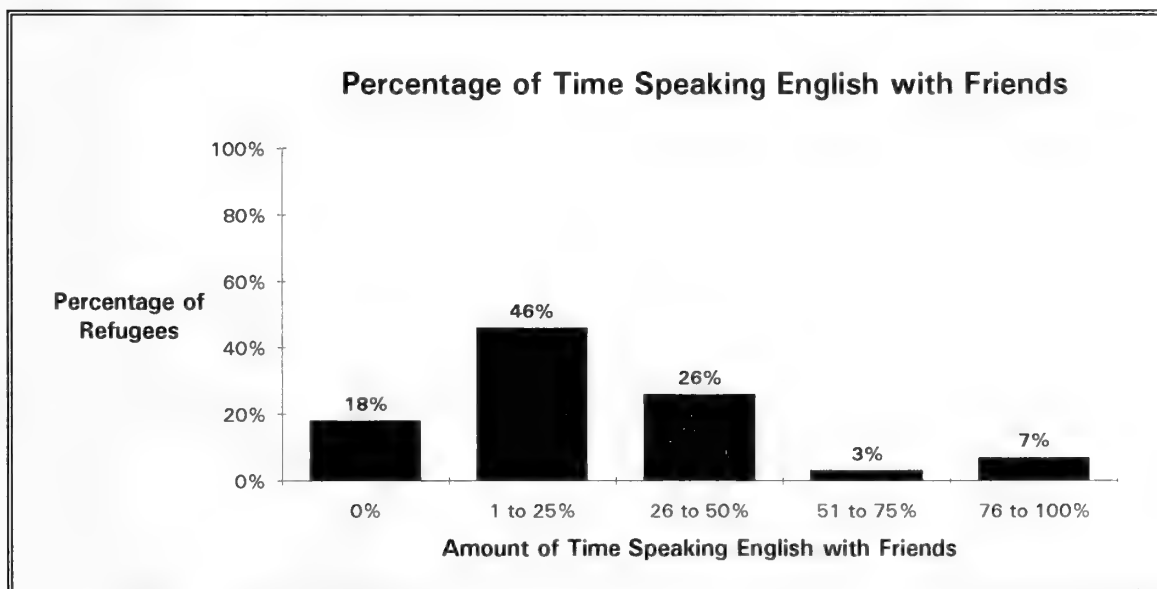
While 10% of Laotian refugees are fluent in English, 83% can speak and understand at least short conversations. This trend is similar to their abilities to read and write English.



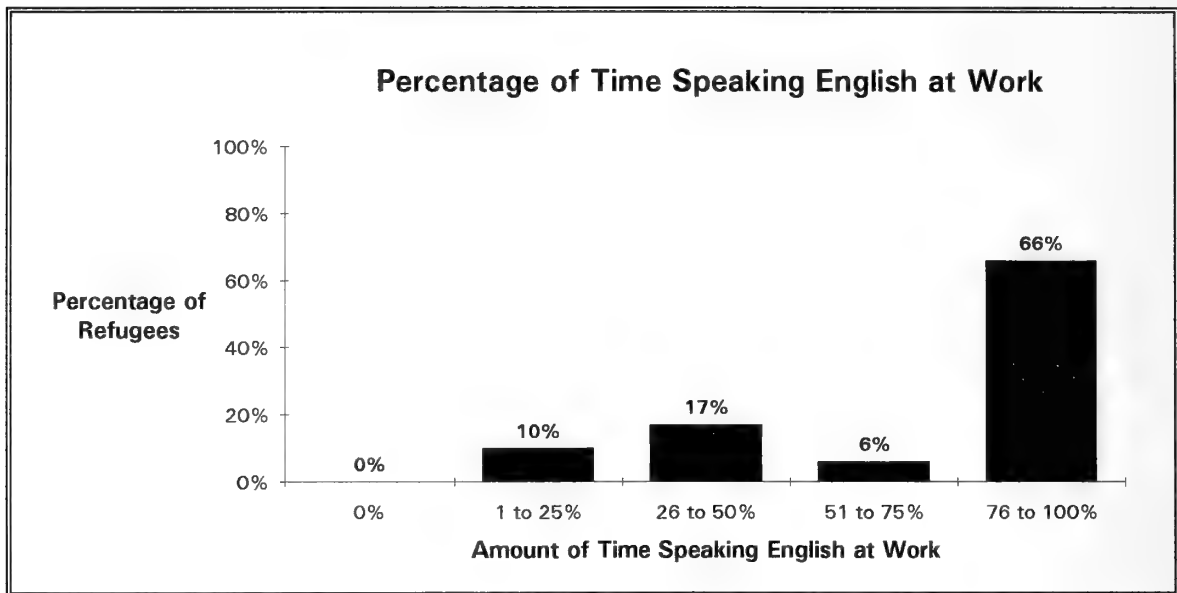




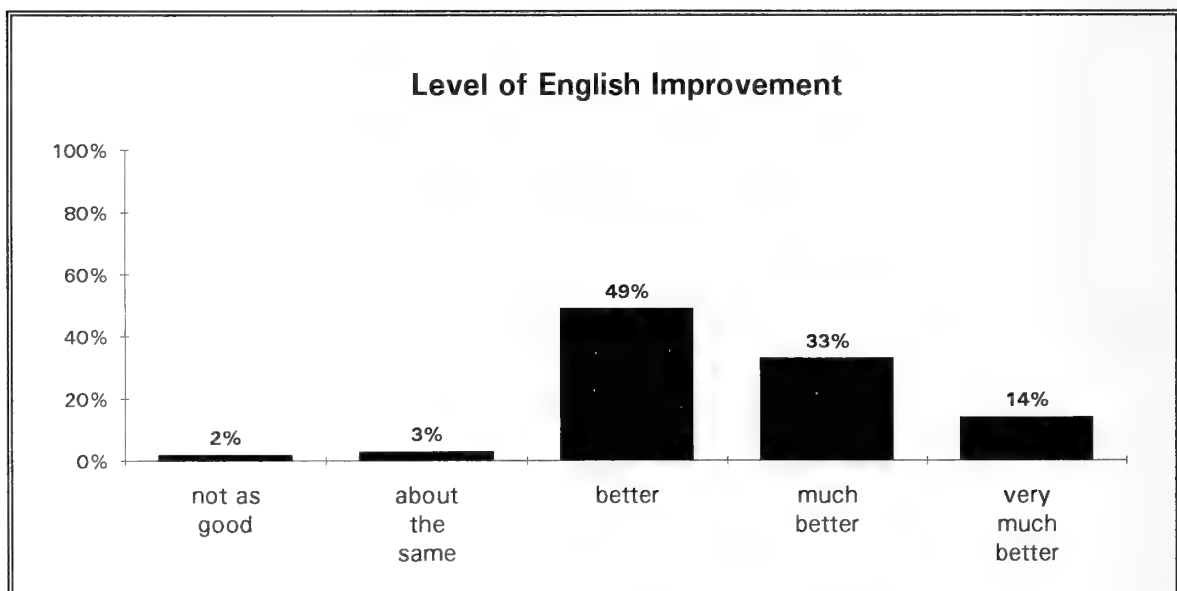
When speaking to family members most Laotian refugees speak their native language. Almost one quarter never speak English with family, another half speak English less than 25% of the time, and only 6% report speaking English more than half the time with family members. On average, Laotian refugees speak English with family members 20% of the time.



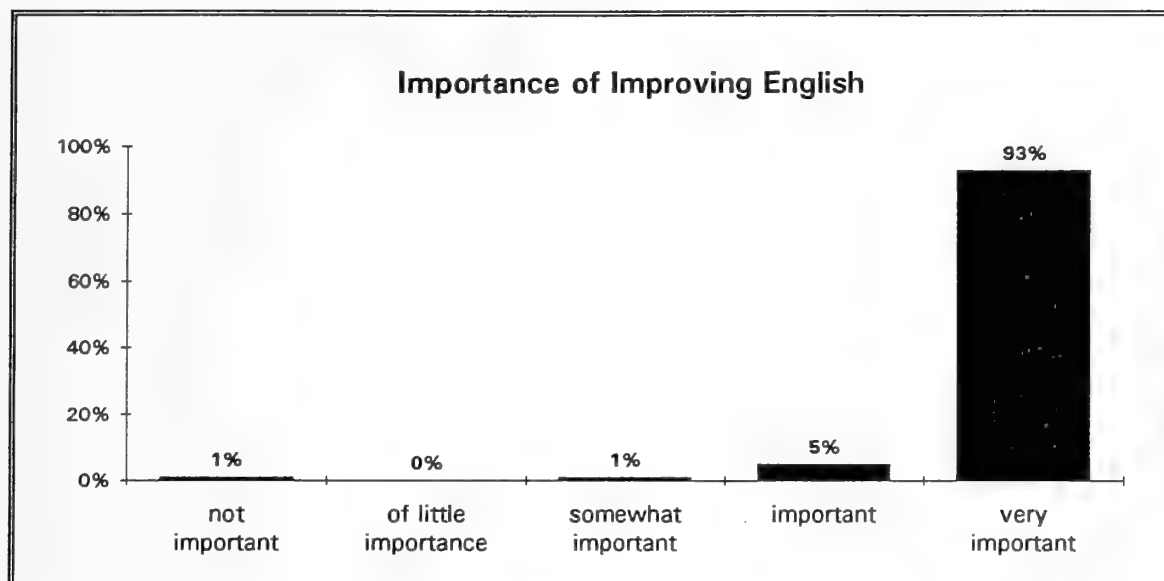
Use of English increases a little with friends. Eighty-two percent report speaking English with friends at least some of the time, but just 10% speak English more than half the time. On average, Laotian refugees speak English with friends 25% of the time.



At work, language use changes dramatically for Laotian refugees. All Laotians report speaking some English at work, and 72% speak English the majority of time while working. On average, Laotian refugees speak English 78% of the time while working.



Most Laotian refugees report improvement in their English speaking abilities since living in the U.S.



Almost all Laotian refugees believe it is important to learn more English.

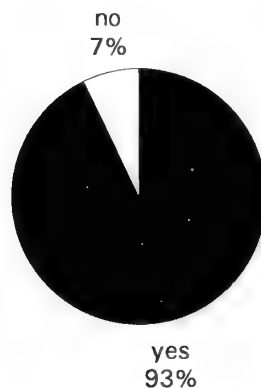
### Common Methods of Learning English

TV or Radio in the U.S.	91%
Talking and Listening to People in the U.S.	91%
Children in the U.S.	77%
ESL or Other Formal Class in the U.S.	62%
Reading Newspapers, Magazines or Books in the U.S.	54%
School in Native Country	32%
School in the U.S.	26%
Everyday Conversation in Native Country	24%

Laotians have used and continue to use a wide variety of methods to improve their English skills.

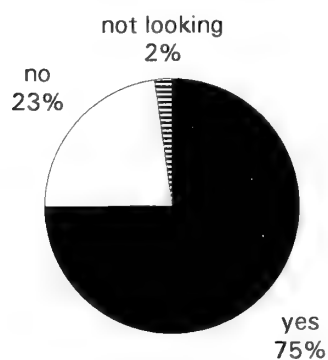
## EMPLOYMENT & INCOME

**Have Worked in the U.S.**



Most Laotian refugees have worked in the U.S.

**Currently Working**



Three-fourths of Laotian refugees are currently working, and most unemployed Laotians are looking for work.

## Laotian Occupational Areas

OCCUPATION	PERCENT	AVERAGE HOURLY WAGE
manufacturing	39%	\$ 7.83
technician work	14%	\$ 8.88
auto repair/transportation	9%	\$10.12
freight/stock/materials	8%	\$ 8.83
labor	6%	\$ 5.50
personal service	6%	\$ 6.90
food preparation/service	5%	\$ 6.87
construction trades	3%	\$ 7.95
professional/administrative	3%	\$11.06
clerical/administrative support	2%	*
sales	2%	*
farming/fishing	1%	*
religious	1%	*
self-employed/business owner	1%	*

\* Not enough interviews to calculate wage.

The occupational areas for Laotian refugees are diverse. The most common type of work is manufacturing, with almost two in five workers employed in this area. Technician work and auto-repair and transportation are also very common. The best paid occupations, on average, are professional and administrative, followed by auto-repair and transportation. (Note that these occupations may only be applicable to the Houston area, and wages are averages for a relatively small number of interviewees. Wages will be affected by, among other things, length of employment and skill level.)

## Laotian Interviewees' Occupations

### General Manufacturing

assembly	15.8 %
machinist / machine operator	12.4 %
general manufacturing	4.5 %
electric assembly	1.7 %
fabricator	1.1 %
printing	.6 %
plastics	.6 %
production manager	.6 %
goldsmith	.6 %

### Technologist / Technician

general technician	7.3 %
electronics / digitization work	4.5 %
computer operator / technician	1.7 %
health / medical technician	.6 %
drafting designer / technician	.6 %

### Motor / Transportation Work

mechanic	8.5 %
service station / attendant	.6 %

### Freight Stock and Material Mover

warehouse/ shipping/ receiving/ supply	6.8 %
delivery	1.1 %

### Labor

housekeeper / maid	5.5 %
general manual labor	.6 %
landscaper	.6 %

### Personal Service Occupation

laundry / dry cleaner	1.7 %
jeweler	1.1 %
hair stylist	1.1 %
seamstress / tailor	.6 %
florist	.6 %
hotel / doorman	.6 %

### Food Preparation / Processing / Distribution

cook / baker	2.8 %
food prep / assistant	1.7 %
sacker / packer	.6 %

Construction Trade

welder	1.1 %
painter / wall paper	1.1 %
construction	.6 %
carpeting	.6 %

Manager / Administrator / Professional

manager / supervisor	1.7 %
accountant / payroll	1.1 %

Clerical / Administrative Support

clerk	1.1 %
bookkeeping	.6 %
assistant	.6 %

Salesperson / Sales Clerk

salesperson / trader	1.1 %
cashier / checker / sale	.6 %

Farming / Fishing / Forestry

fisherman / shrimper	.6 %
farmer	.6 %

Business Owner / Self-Employed

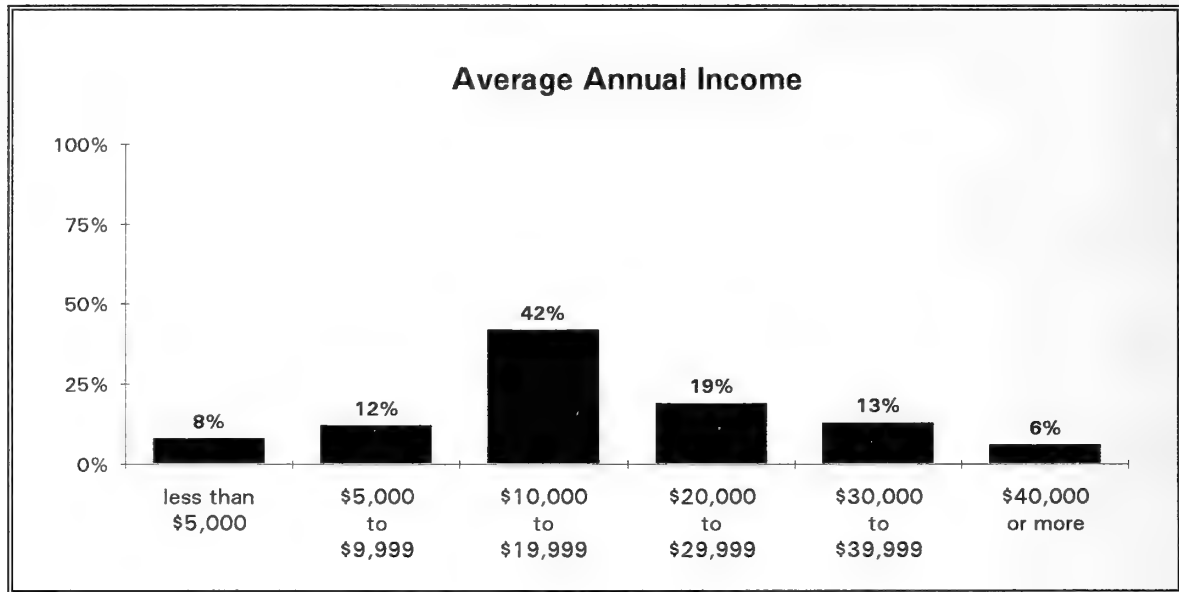
general	.6 %
---------	------

Religious Work

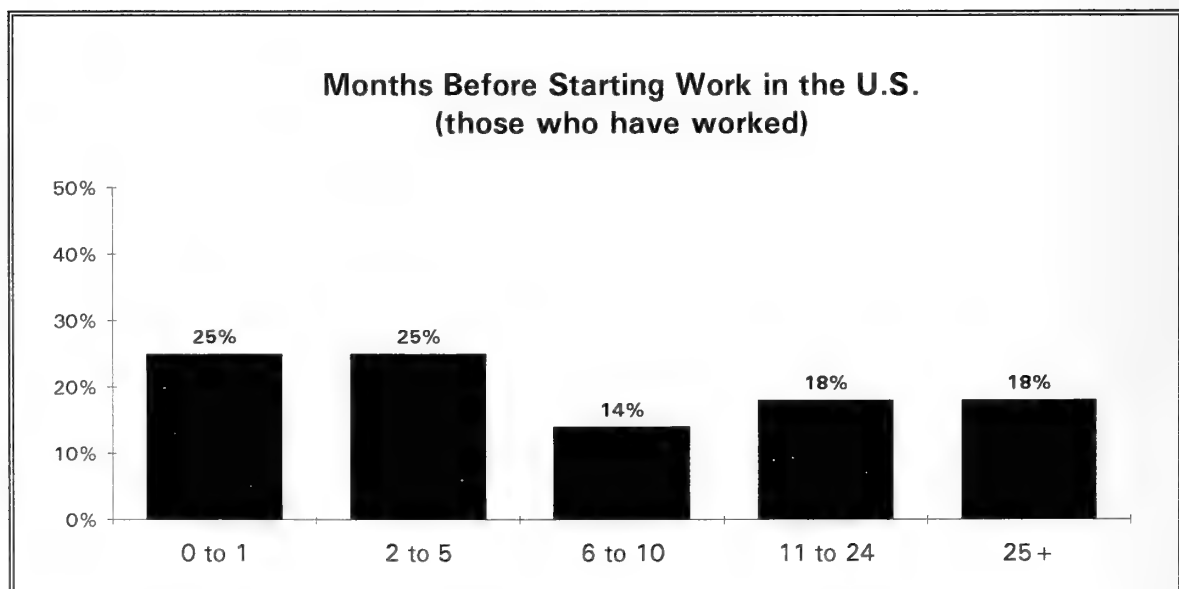
priest / pastor	.6 %
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Miscellaneous

general help	1.1 %
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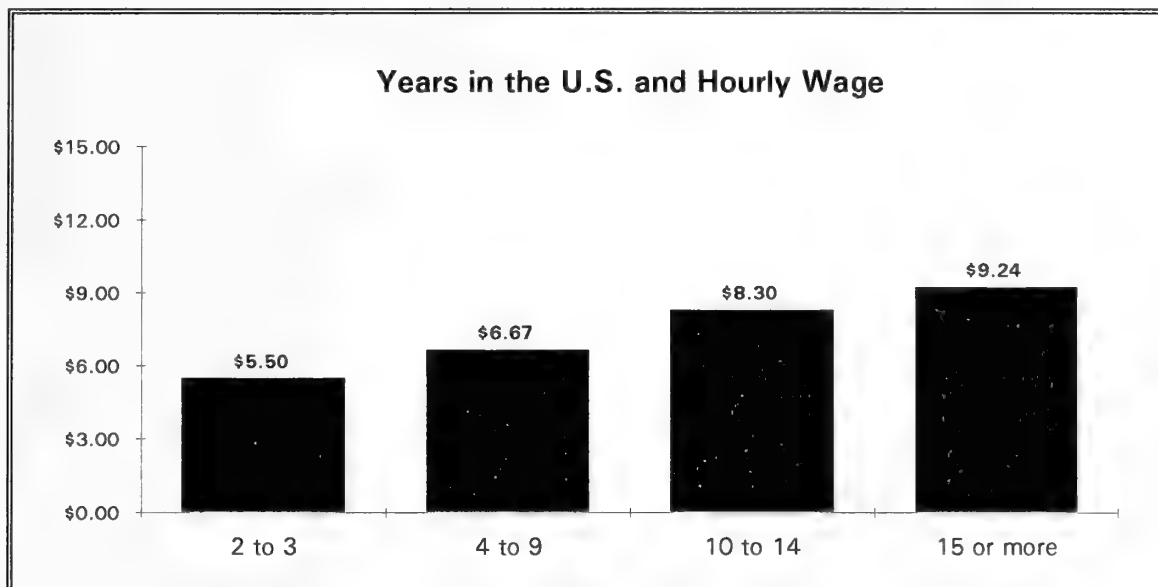


The average annual income of a working Laotian refugee was \$19,219 in 1992. Half of working Laotian refugees earned more than \$16,000, and half earned less. (Incomes were calculated for Laotian refugees arriving in the U.S. before 1992 and earning some income in 1992.)

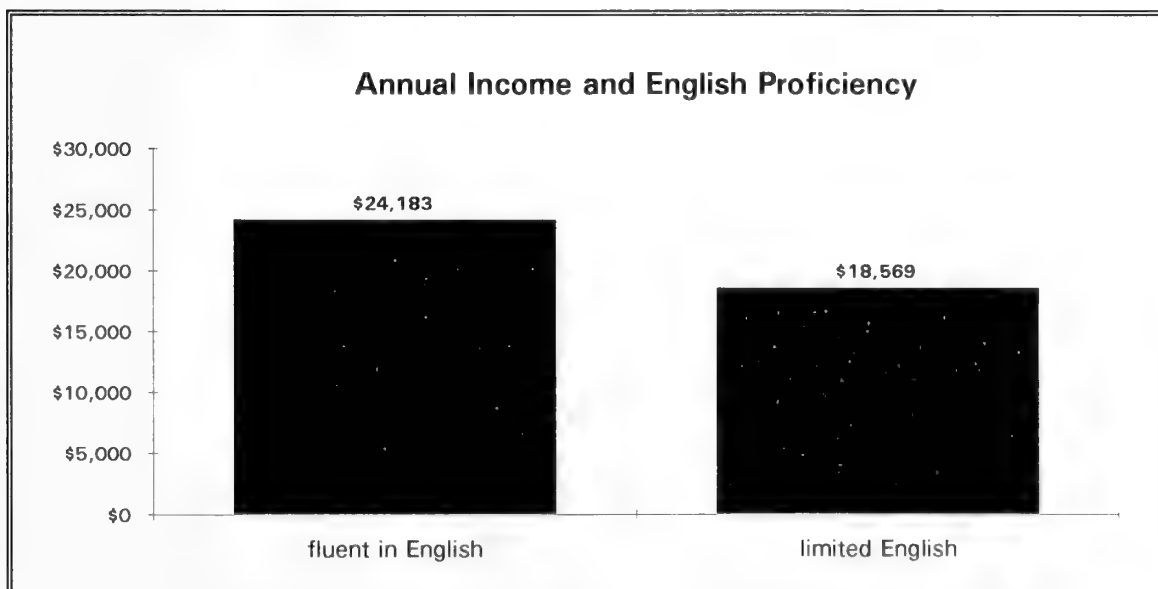


Half of Laotian refugees (of those who have worked in the U.S.) started their first job within five months of living in the U.S.

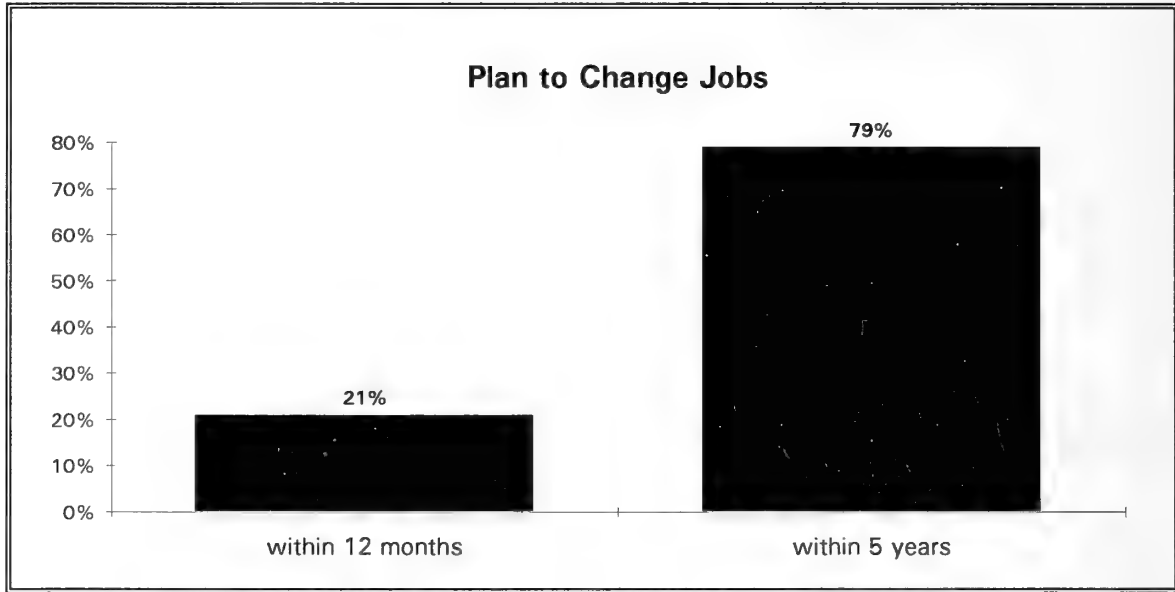




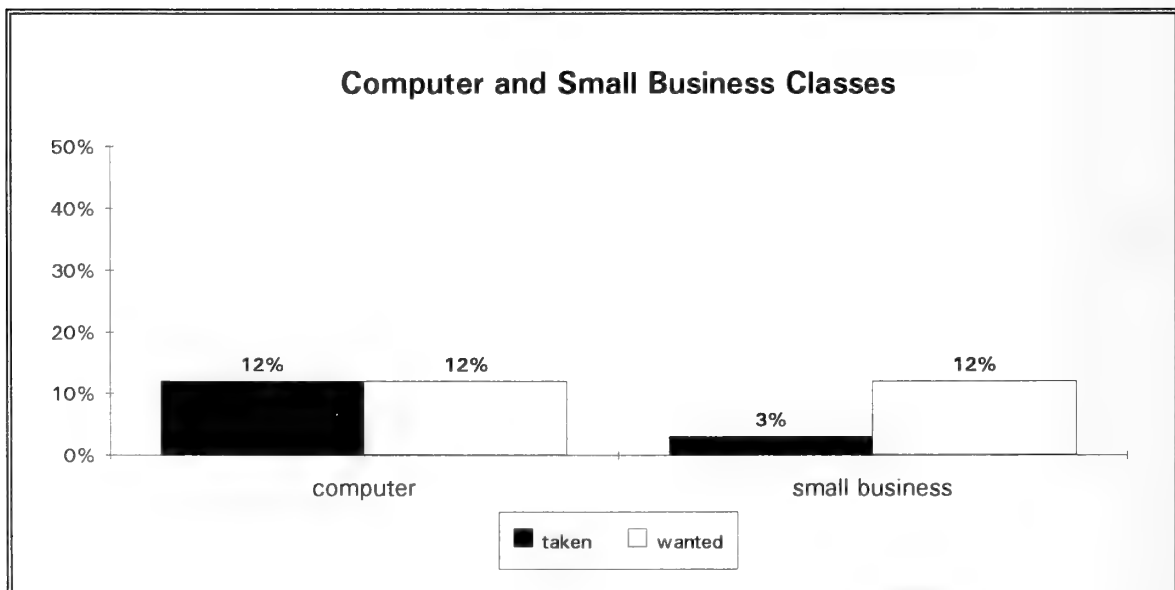
Average wage for Laotian refugees slowly increases with the number of years spent in the U.S.



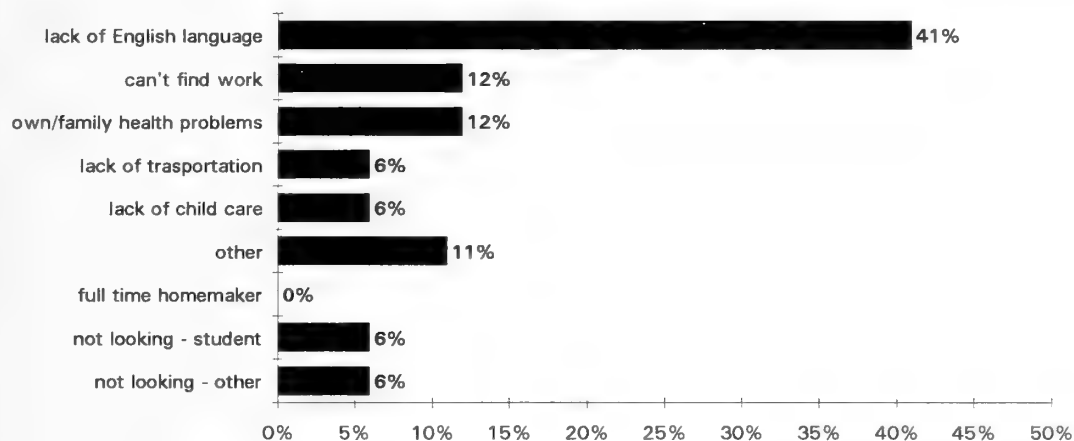
Average annual income increases with English skills. (Incomes were calculated for Laotian refugees arriving in the U.S. before 1992 and earning some income in 1992.)



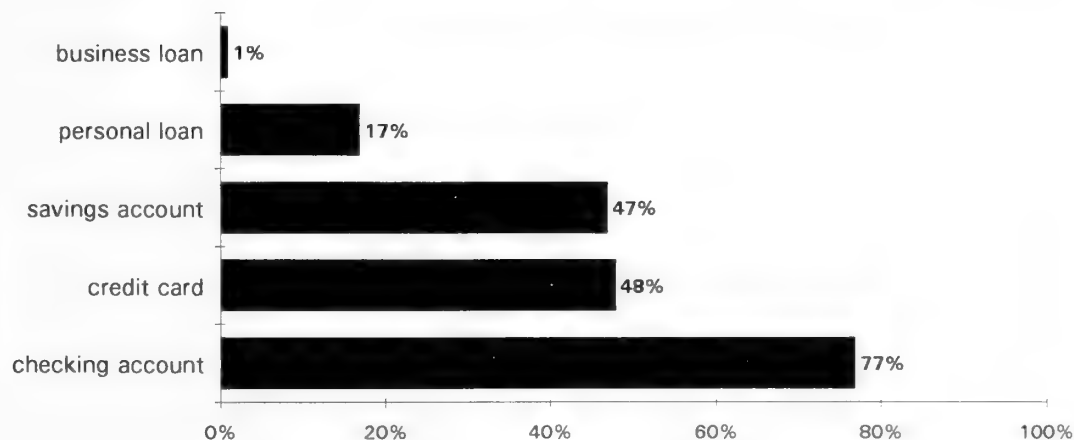
Most working Laotian refugees do not plan to change jobs in the next 12 months. However, most anticipate a job change in the next five years.



Twelve percent of Laotians have taken a computer class, the same percentage that would like to take a computer class. Just 3% have taken a class on small business, and 12% would like to take one.

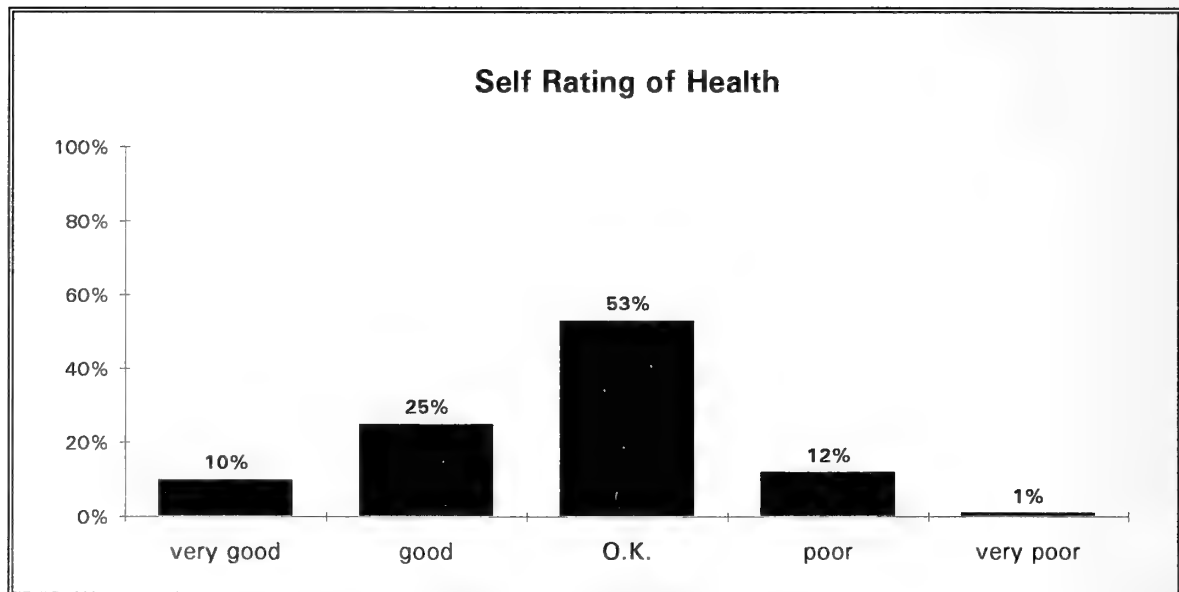
**Reason for Never Working in the U.S.**

Laotian refugees who have not worked in the U.S. cite lack of English, their own or a family member's health problem, and the inability to find work as the most important reasons for not working.

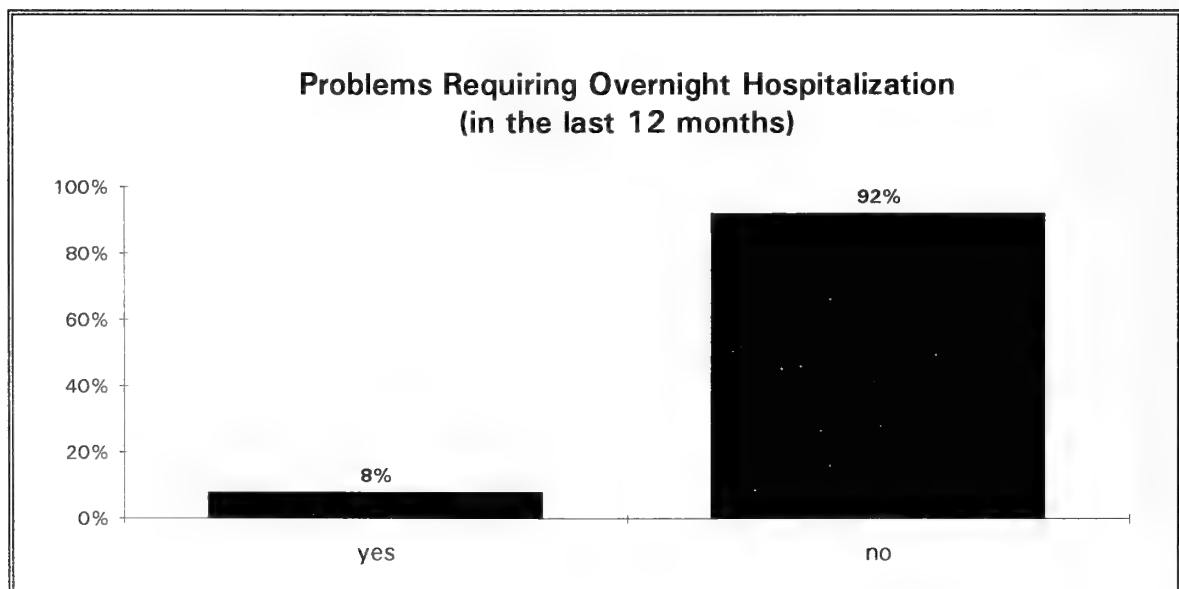
**Percent with Banking Services**

Three-fourths of Laotian refugees have a checking account, and about half have a savings account and a credit card. About one in six has a personal loan, and 1% have a business loan.

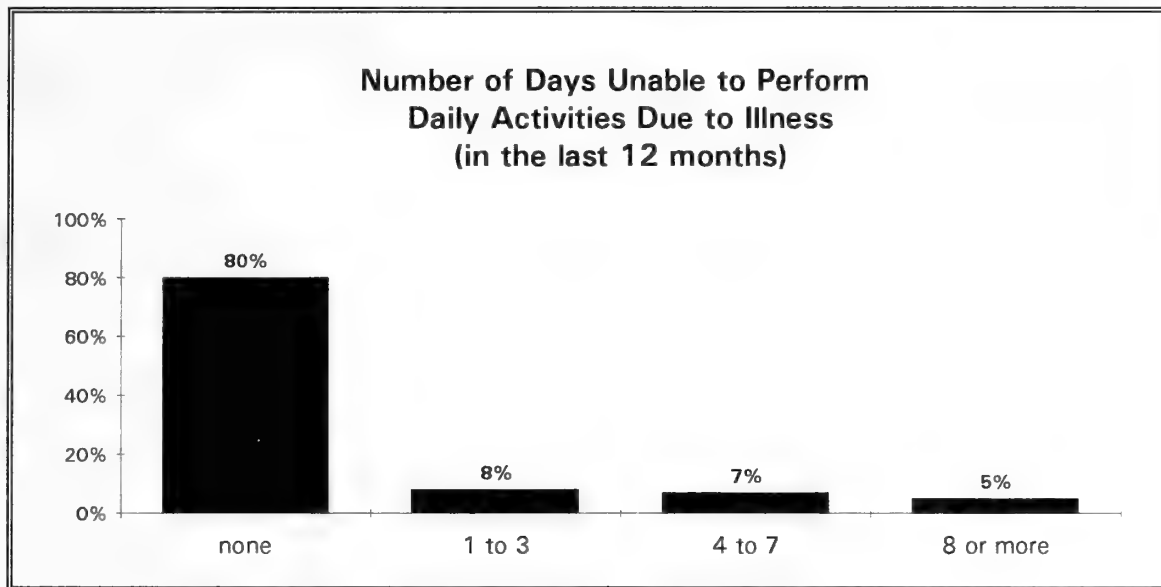
## HEALTH



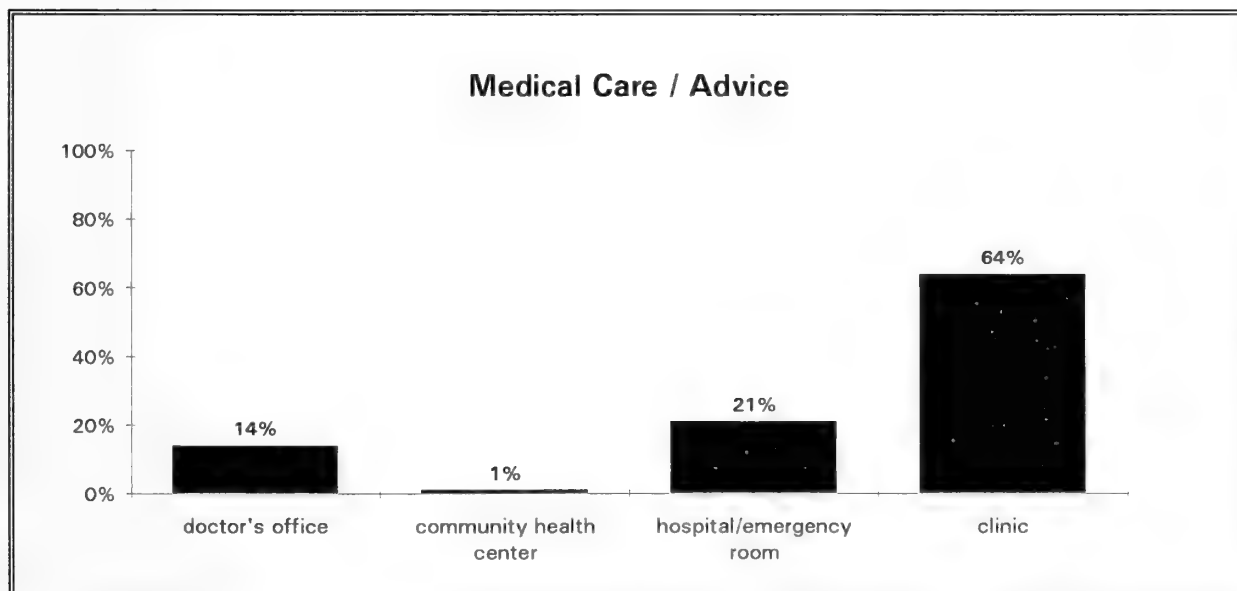
The majority of Laotian refugees consider their health to be O.K. One in ten consider their health to be very good, and 13% rate it as poor or very poor.



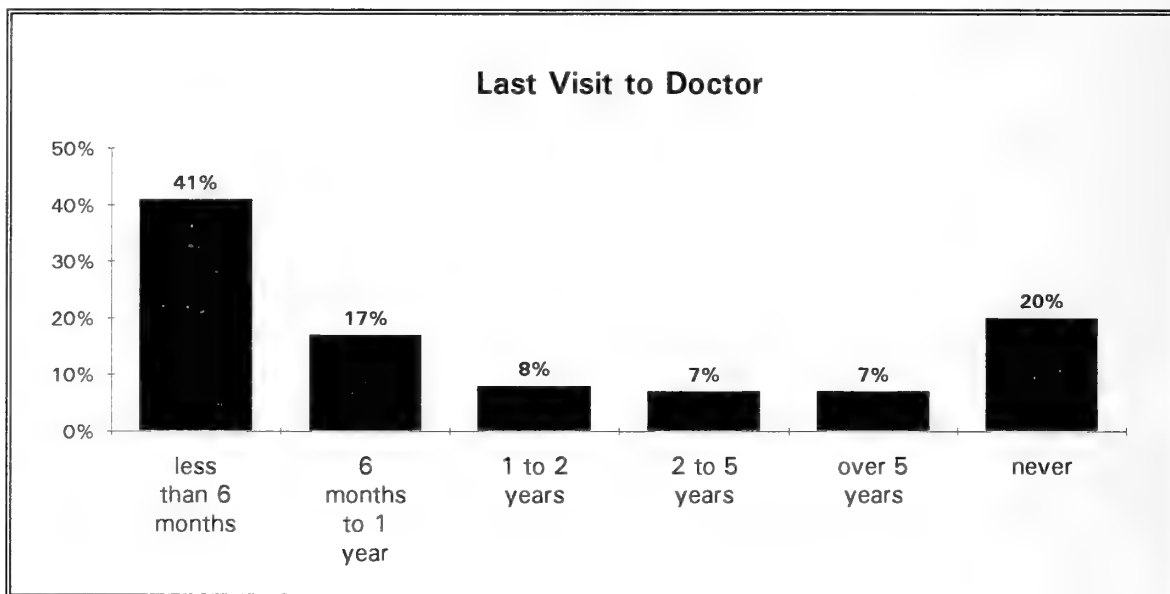
Eight percent of Laotian refugees spent at least one night in the hospital during the previous 12 months (includes childbirth).



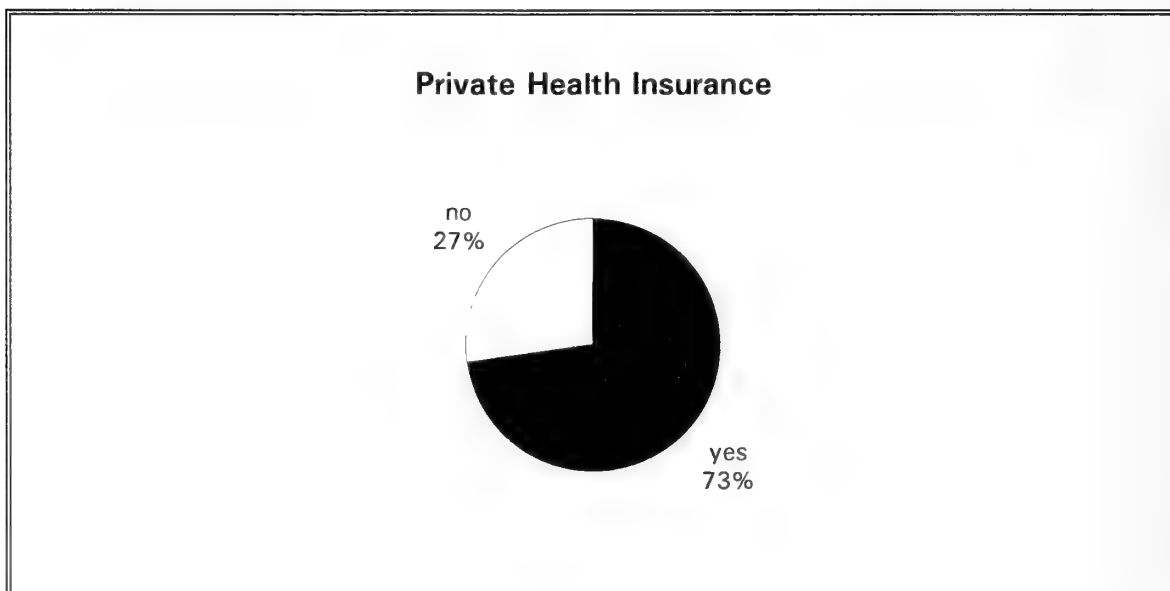
Eighty percent of Laotian refugees reported they did not miss performing their daily activities due to illness. However, it is unknown to what extent they work even when feeling ill.



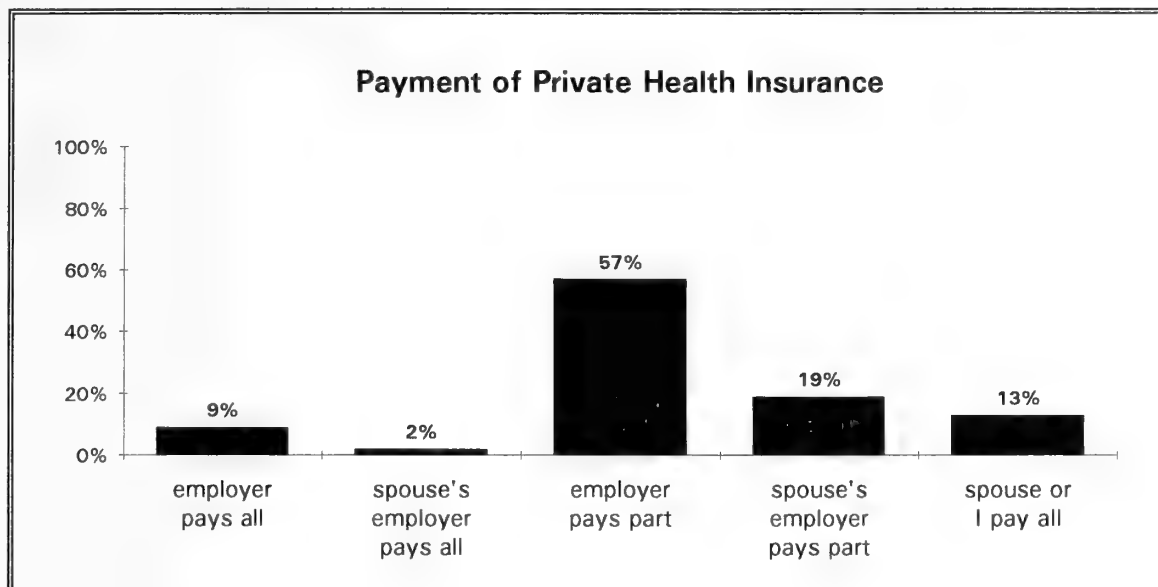
When in need of medical care or advice, most Laotian refugees go to a clinic.



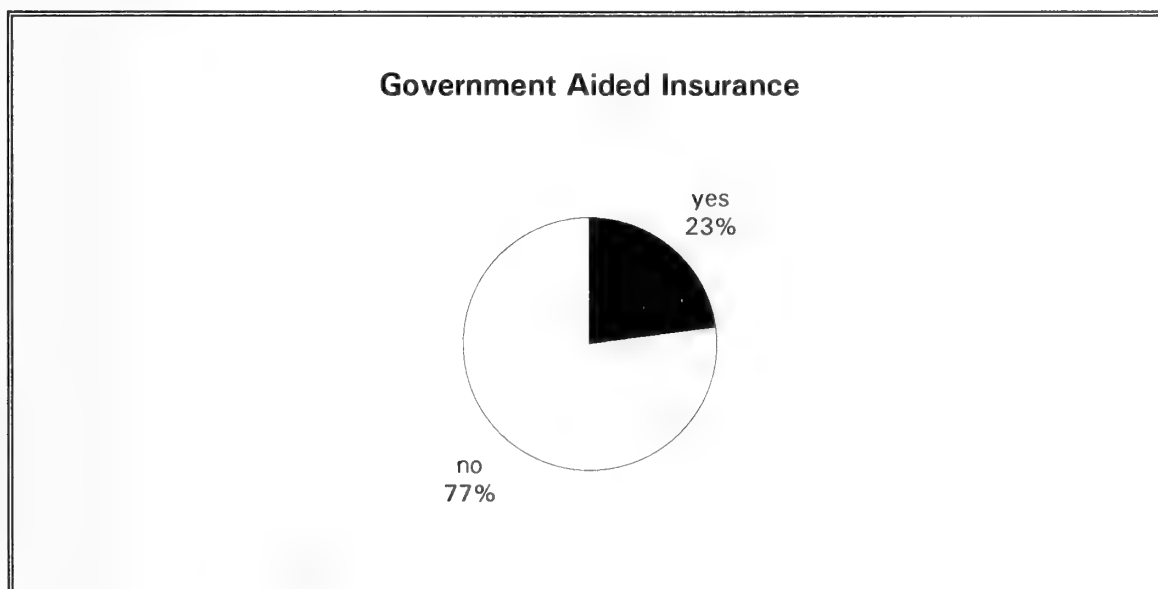
Fifty-eight percent of Laotian refugees had been to see a doctor in the previous 12 months. One in five had never been to see a doctor.



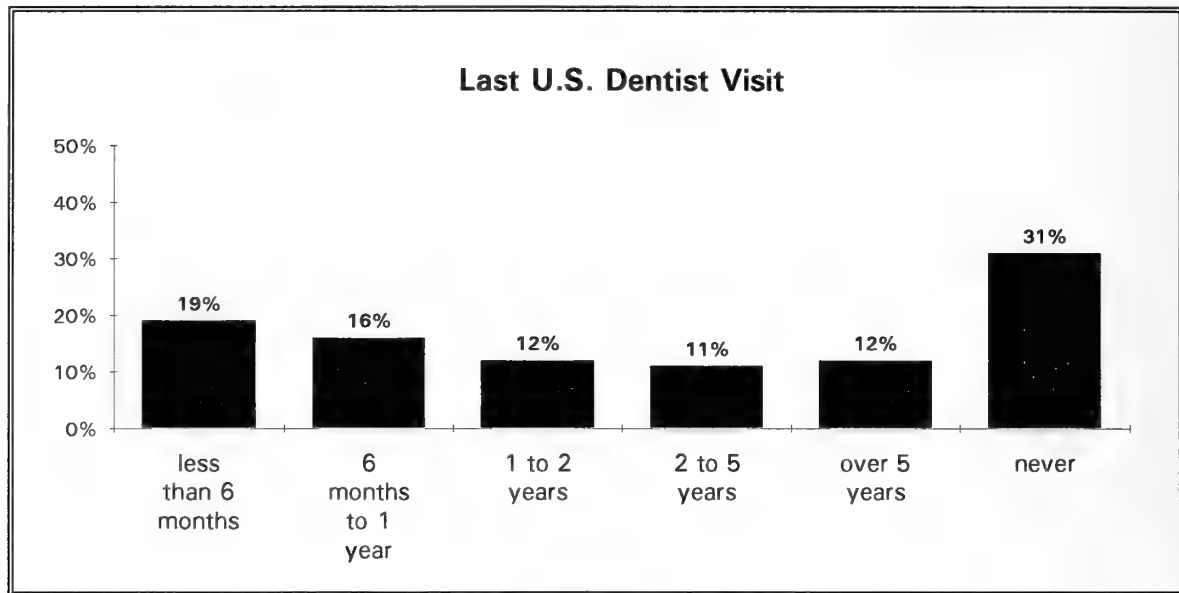
Almost three-fourths of Laotian refugees reported having private health insurance.



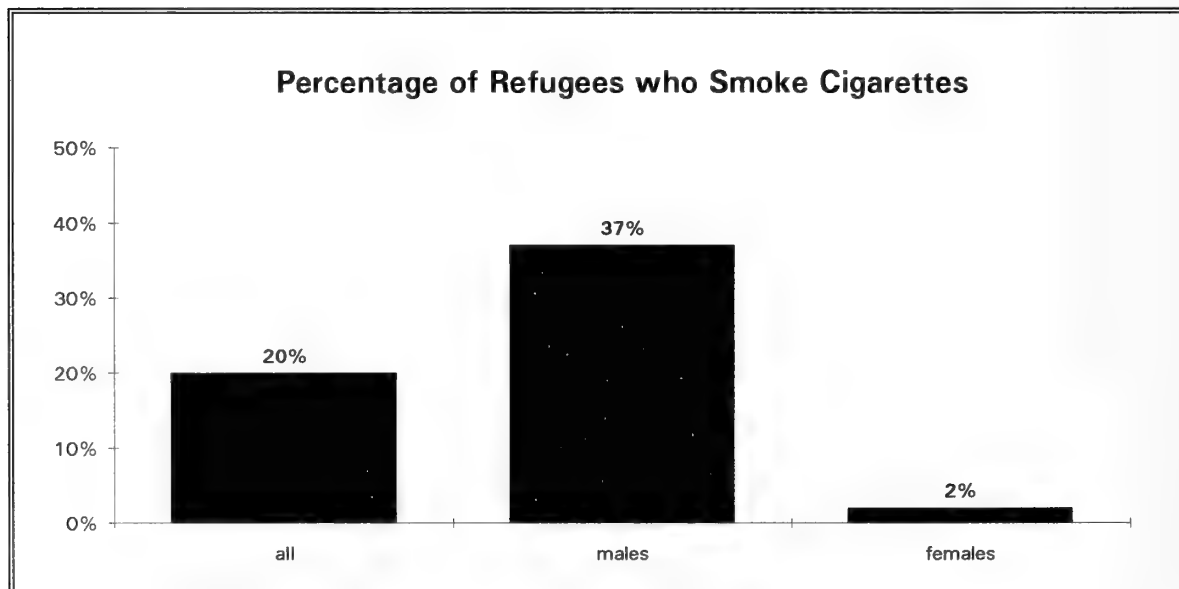
In most cases, a Laotian refugee's employer or his/her spouse's employer pays for part of their private health insurance.



Of the 27% of Laotian refugees that do not have private health insurance, 23% have government assisted health insurance such as Medicare, Medicaid, or County Indigent Health Care. However, 21% of all Laotian refugees have no health insurance.

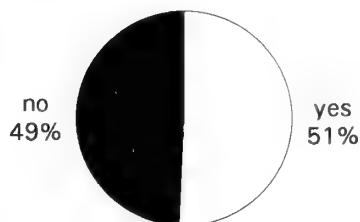


Approximately one-third of Laotian refugees had been to the dentist in the past 12 months, another third had been more than a year ago, and the remaining 31% had never been to a dentist in the U.S.

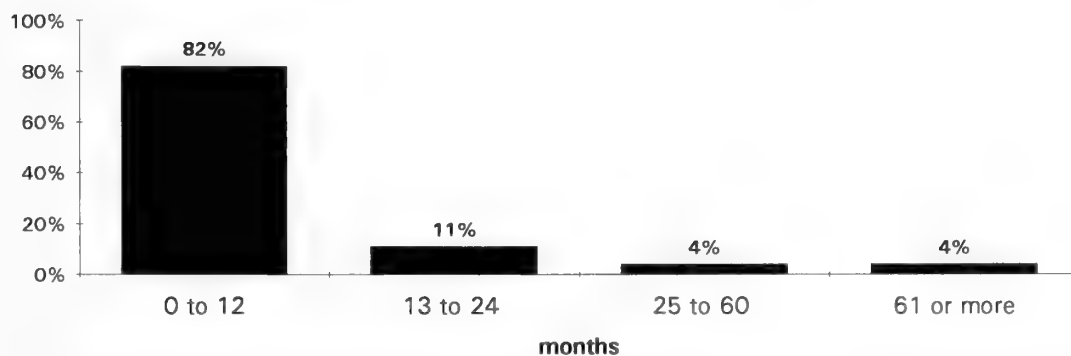


Overall, a smaller percentage of Laotian refugees smoke than Texas' general population. This is because female Laotians rarely smoke. However, a very high percentage of Laotian males smoke.

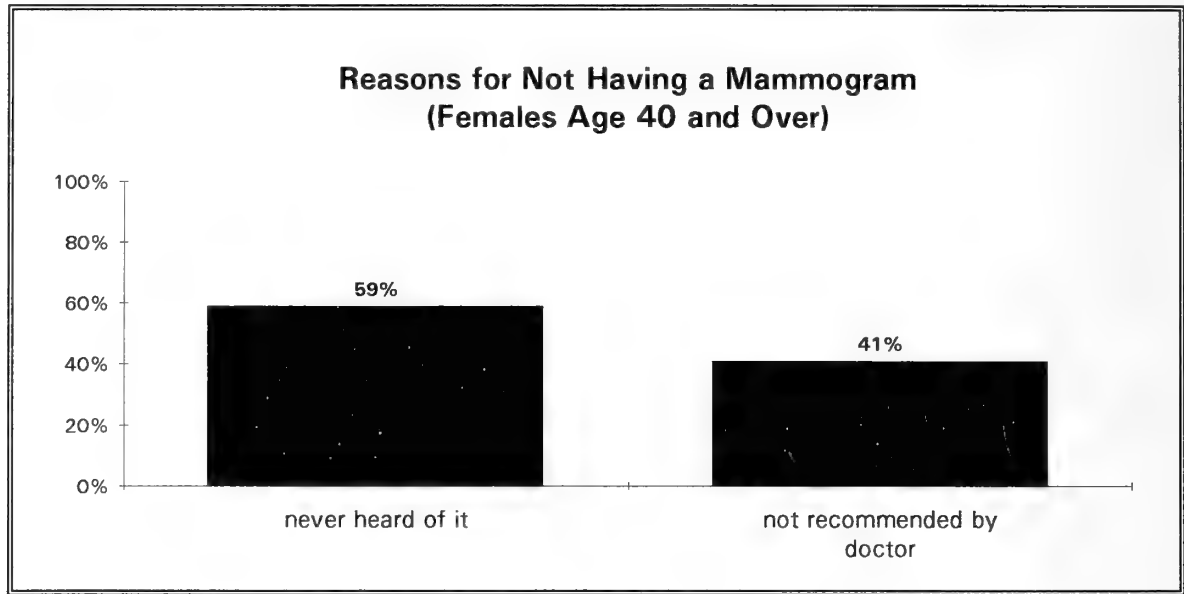


**Laotian Mammogram Screening  
(Females 40 and Over)**

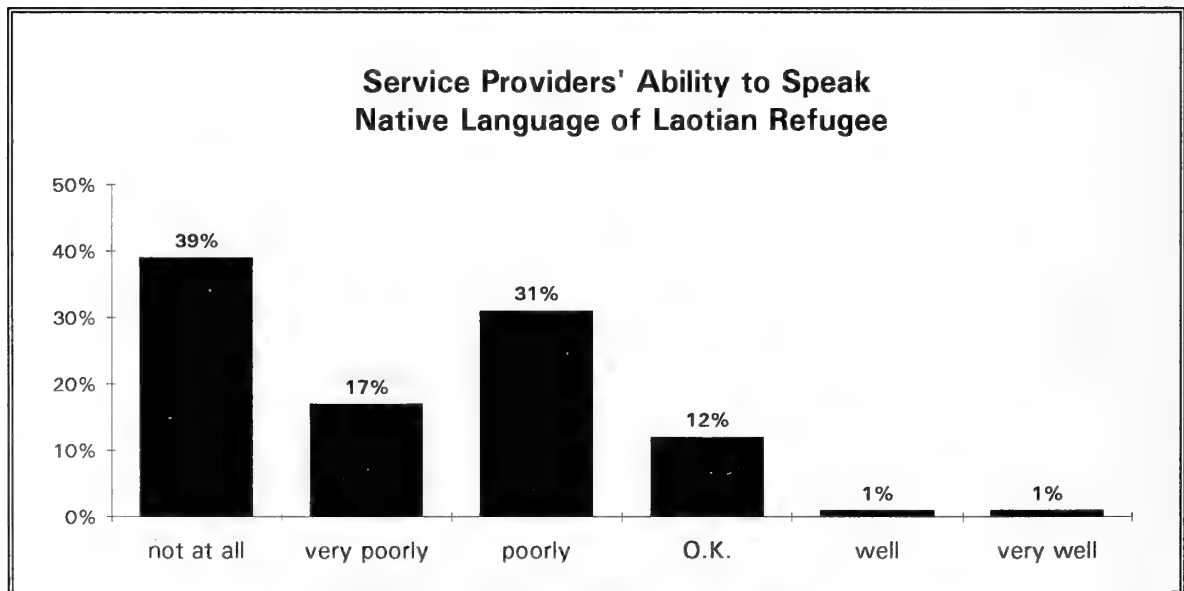
Half of Laotian refugee women age 40 and over have had mammogram screenings. This is lower than the rate of Texas women 40 and older, who have had screenings at a rate of 70% (Texas Department of Health).

**Months Since Last Mammogram  
(Females Age 40 and Over  
who have been Screened)**

Of Laotian refugee women who have had screenings, most were screened in the previous 12 months.

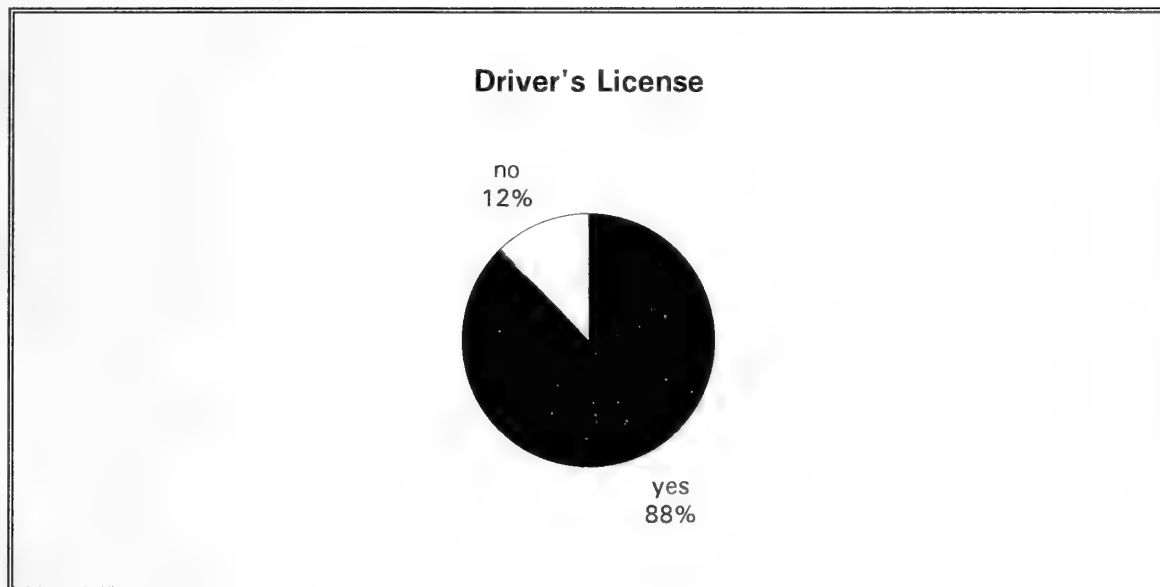


There were two reasons Laotian women 40 and older hadn't been screened. Either they hadn't heard of a mammogram, or it wasn't recommended by their doctor.

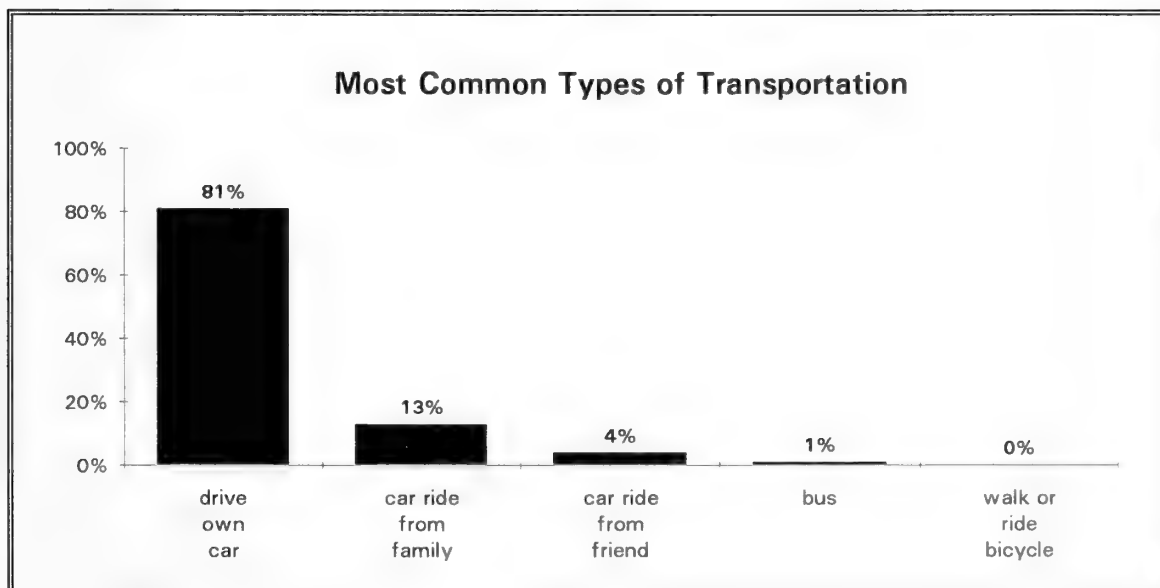


Laotian refugees who need service but don't speak English have a problem - service providers don't speak their language well.

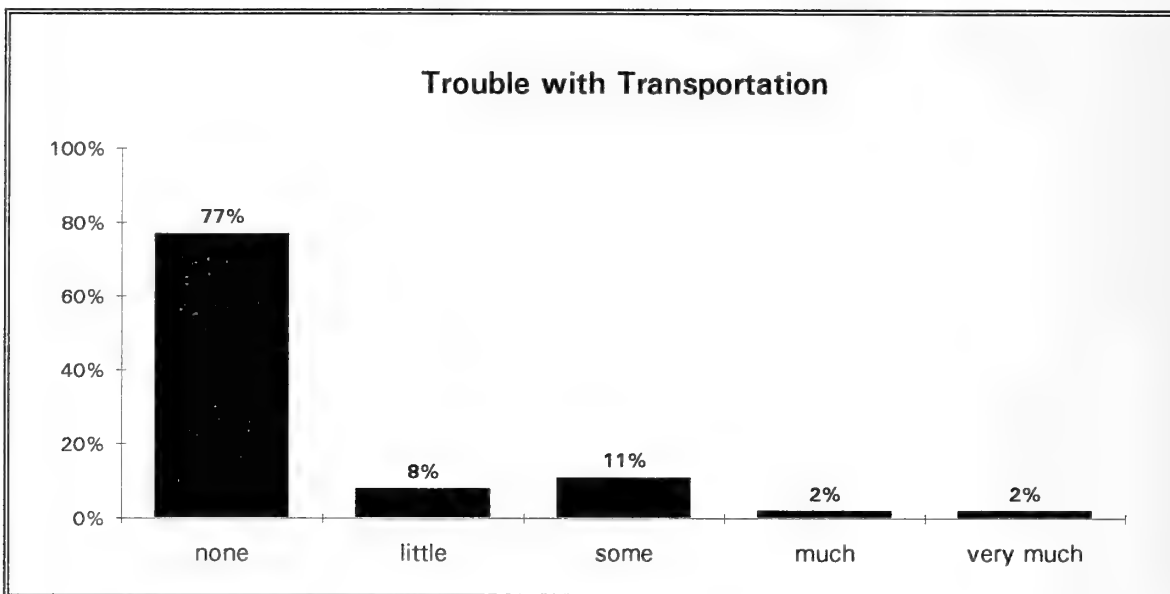
## TRANSPORTATION



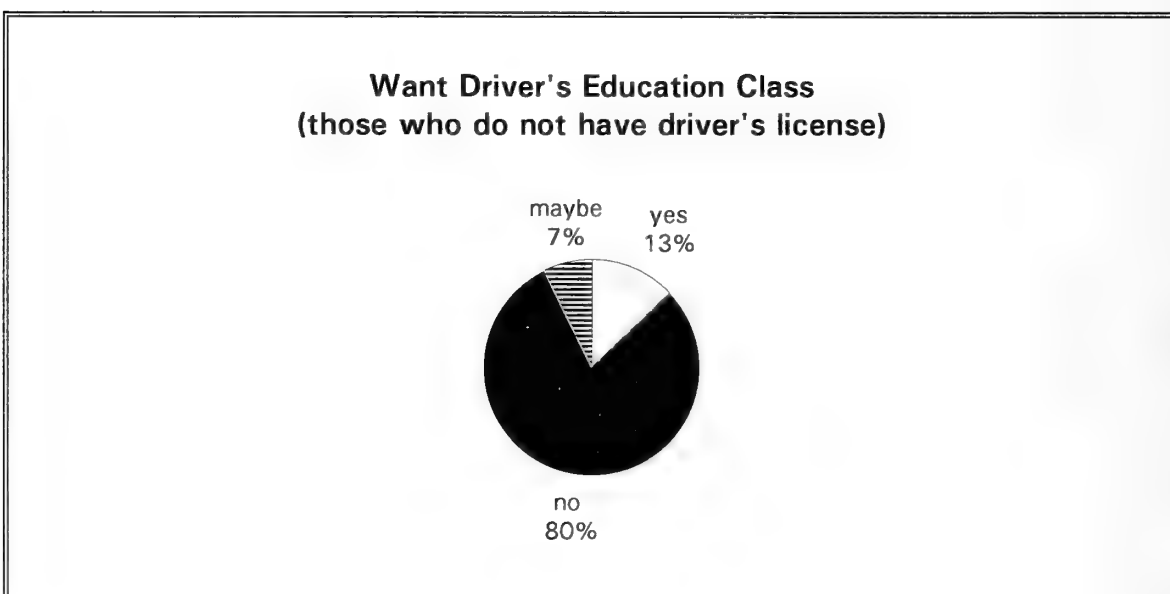
Most Laotian refugees have a driver's license.



The majority of Laotian refugees drive their own car or ride with a family member.



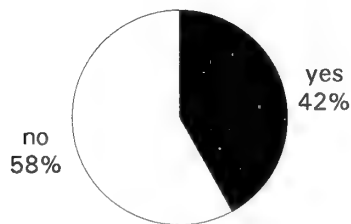
For the most part, transportation is not a problem for Laotians.



Of the 12% of Laotian refugees without a driver's license most don't want to get one.

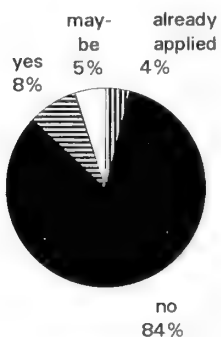
## CITIZENSHIP

### U.S. Citizenship (those who are eligible to apply)



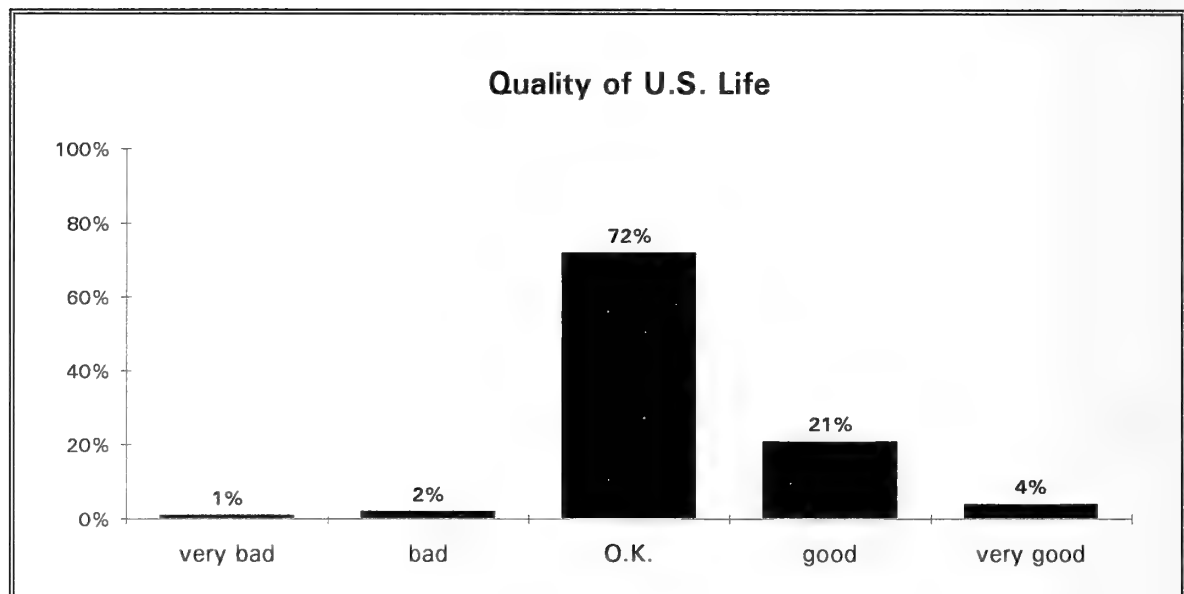
Of those Laotian refugees who have been in the U.S. at least five years and are thus eligible to apply for naturalization, 42% have become U.S. citizens.

### Plans to Apply for Citizenship (those who are not currently citizens)

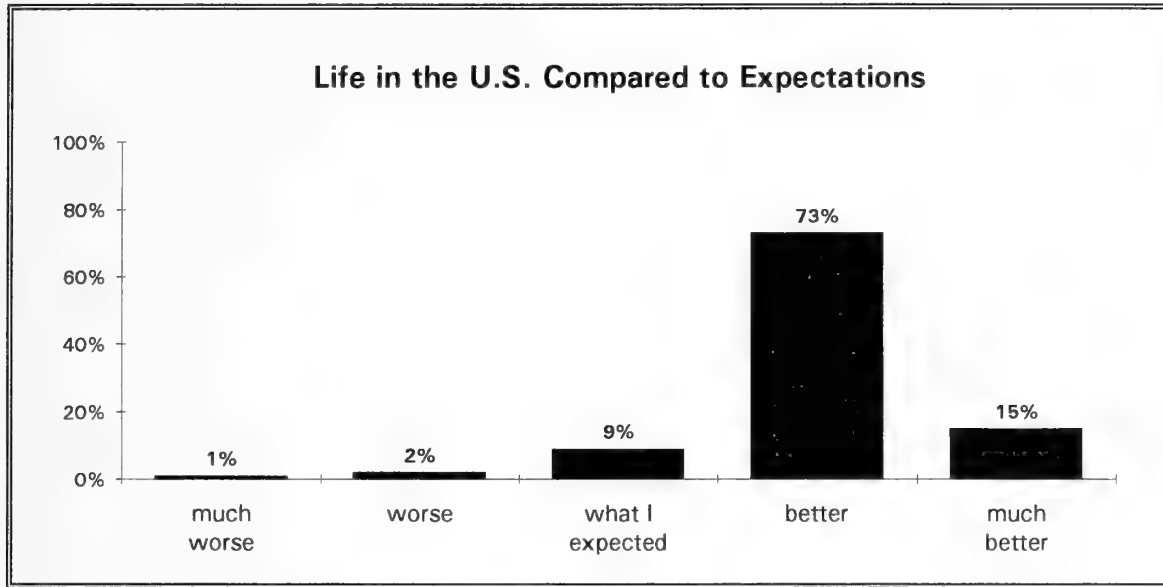


Laotians that have not yet naturalized usually do not plan to do so.

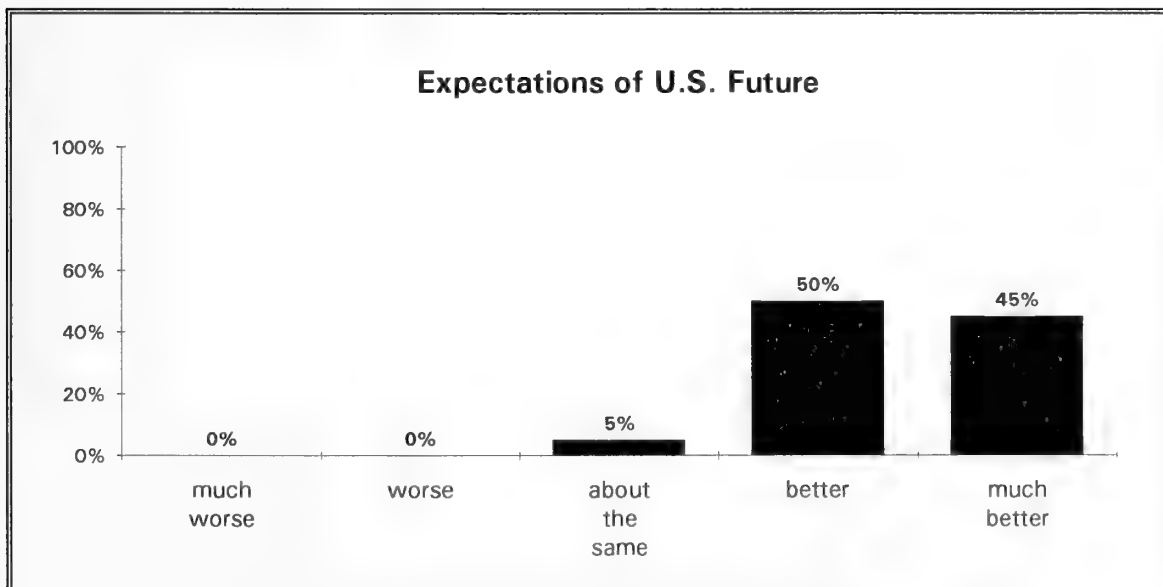
## QUALITY OF LIFE



The majority of Laotian refugees consider their life in the U.S. to be O.K. About one in four believes his/her life is good or very good.



Most Laotians believe their life is better in the U.S. than expected before arriving.



Most Laotian refugees expect their life in the U.S. to get better or much better.









# FORMER SOVIET UNION REFUGEES

## Interviewer Manager

Eugene A. Barg

## Interviewers

Eugene A. Barg, Boris Belyi,  
Sally Gribcova, Valentin Tamarchenko

204 Interviews Conducted

People of many different nationalities and ethnicities lived in the former Soviet Union before its breakup. Individuals of some nationalities, such as Jews, have been persecuted throughout the history of the former Soviet Union. In the late 1980's glasnost diminished the government's powers and brought greater freedom to individuals. This has had negative and positive consequences for individuals from persecuted nationalities and ethnicities. Negatively, persecution within the former Soviet Union has increased because the government is less able to control hateful behaviors. Positively, persecuted individuals and families are now allowed to leave the country under refugee or immigrant status.

While some former Soviet Union refugees, the majority of whom are Jewish, have made Texas their new home, the exact number of former Soviet Union refugees in Texas is unknown. Using U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement information about resettlement, we estimate that 3,000 to 6,000 former Soviet Union refugees live in the state. This number does not include immigrants not classified as refugees or Soviet-Americans born in the U.S.



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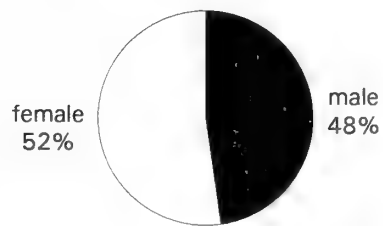
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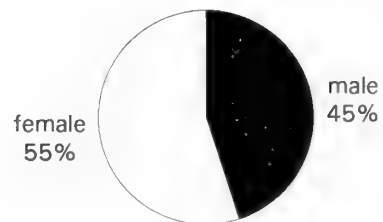
## DEMOGRAPHICS

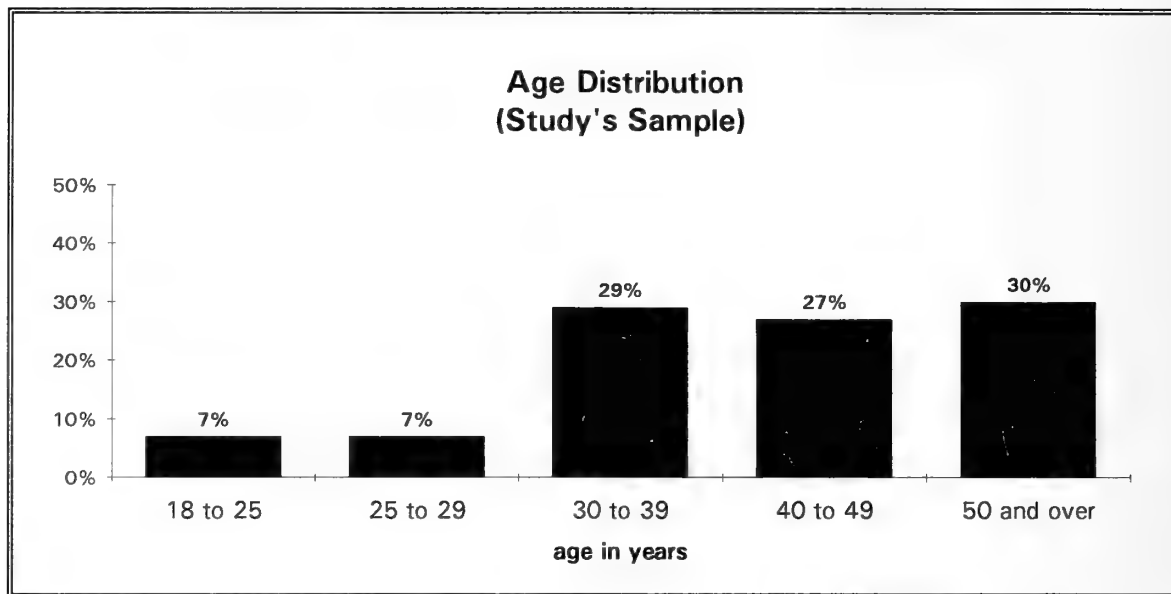
**Distribution of Males and Females  
(U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement)**



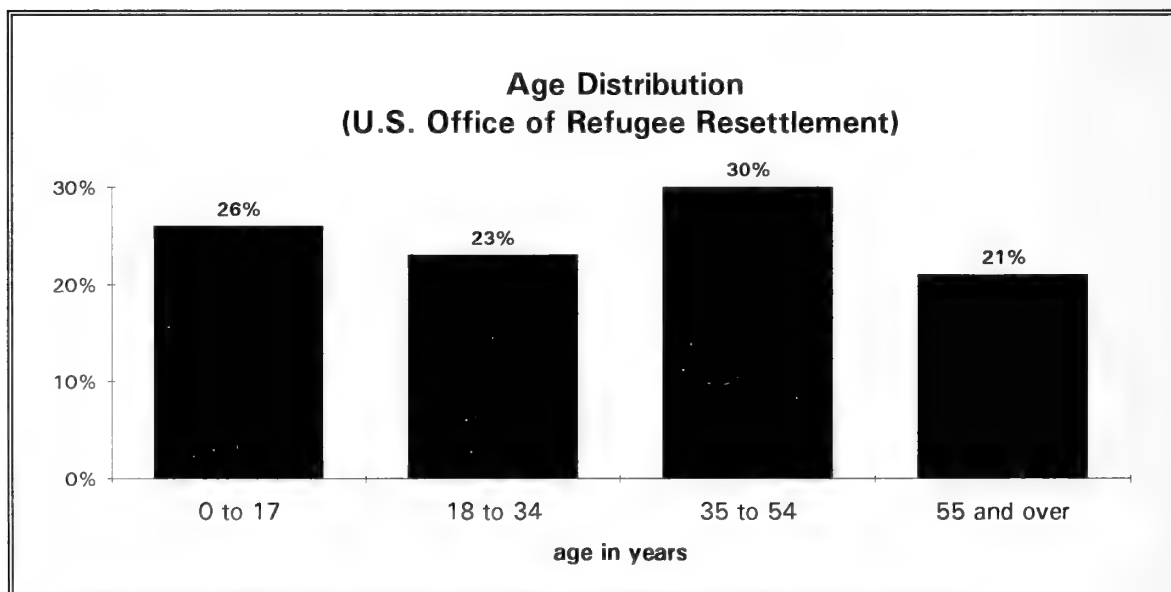
According to the U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement, slightly more female former Soviet Union refugees have resettled in Texas than males. The study's sample reflects this trend.

**Distribution of Males and Females  
(Study's Sample)**

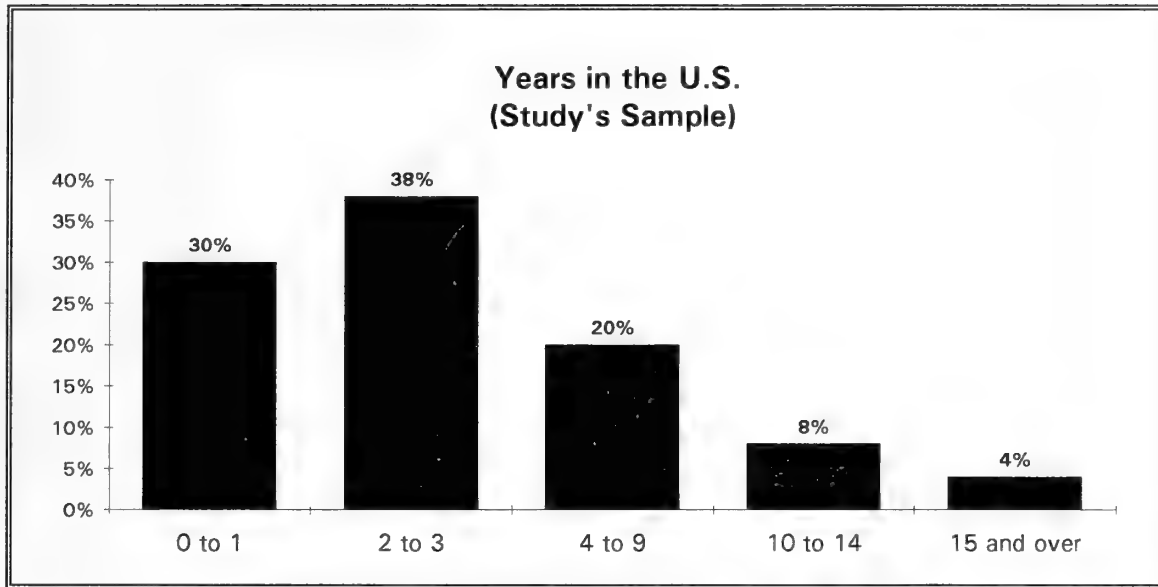




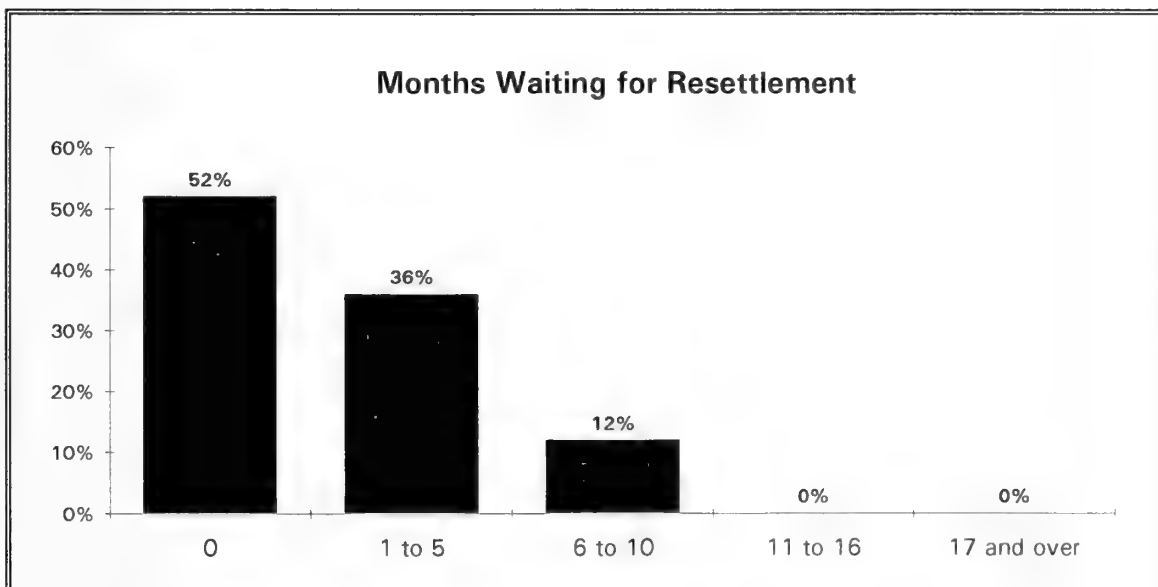
As seen above, the majority of former Soviet Union refugees in the study (57%) were age 40 or older. The average age of the former Soviet Union refugee in the study was 44 years, and half the participants were older than 41 and half were younger. To participate in the study, a refugee had to be at least 18 years of age. However, as seen below, 26% of former Soviet Union refugees in Texas are younger than 18.



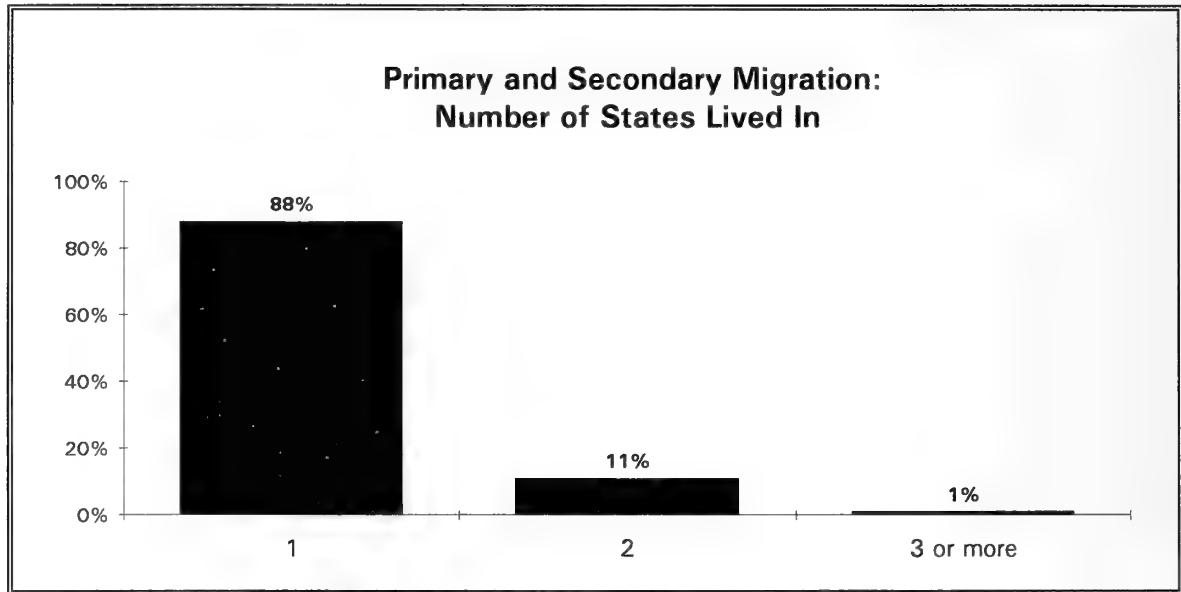




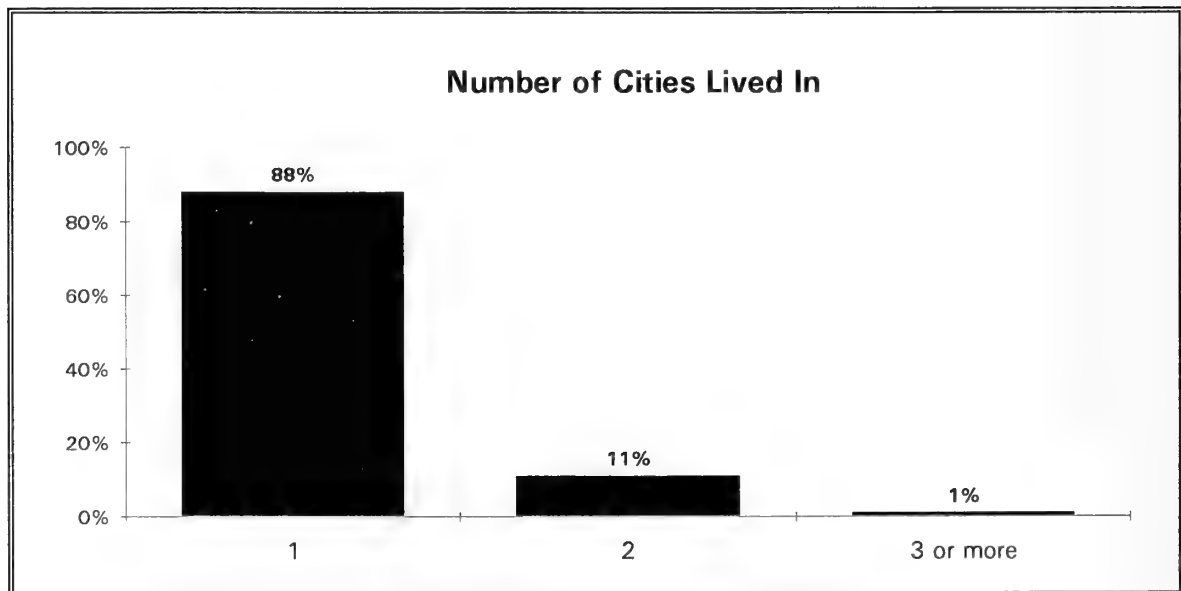
The majority of former Soviet Union refugees in the study (68%) have arrived in the U.S. since 1990 (the study was conducted in 1993).



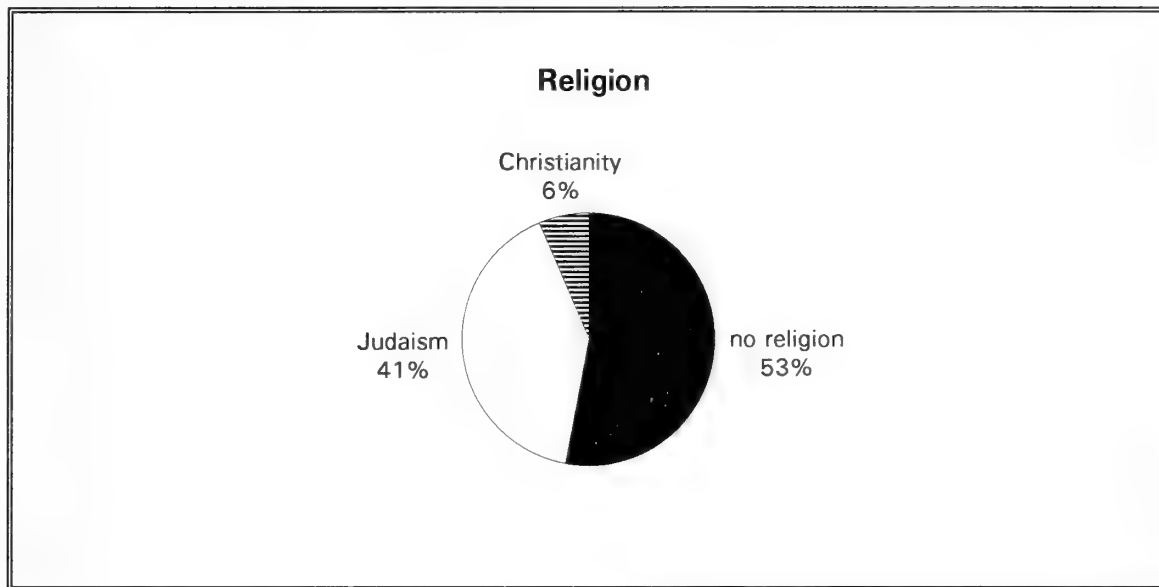
Unlike most refugees, former Soviet Union refugees generally did not have to wait months or years to enter the U.S.



Texas' former Soviet Union refugees have typically lived only in Texas. Just 12% migrated to Texas from another U.S. state.

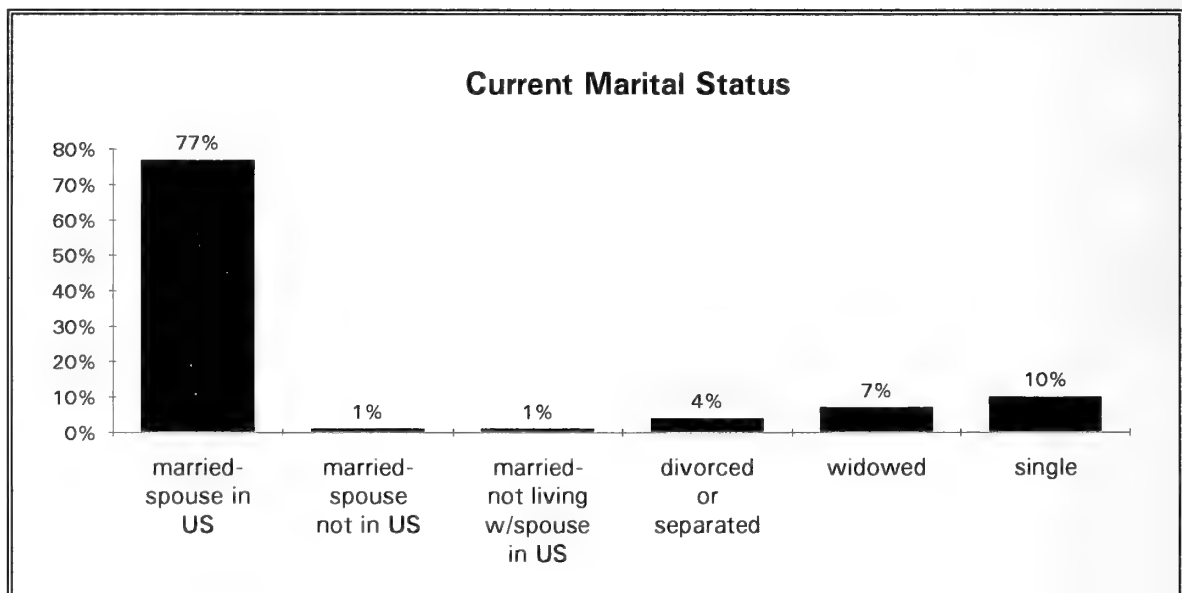


Most former Soviet Union refugees in the study (conducted in Houston) have known Houston as their only U.S. home.

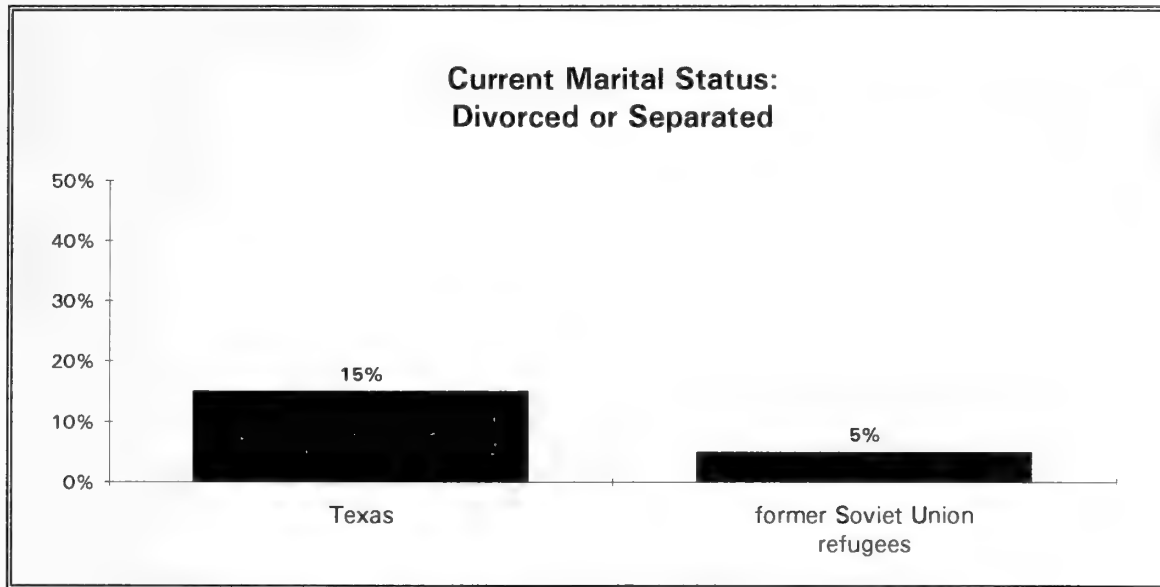


While the majority of former Soviet Union refugees are Jewish, more than half do not consider themselves religious. Forty-one percent report Judaism as their religion, and 6% are Christian. (Only religions named by at least 2% of interviewees were included.)

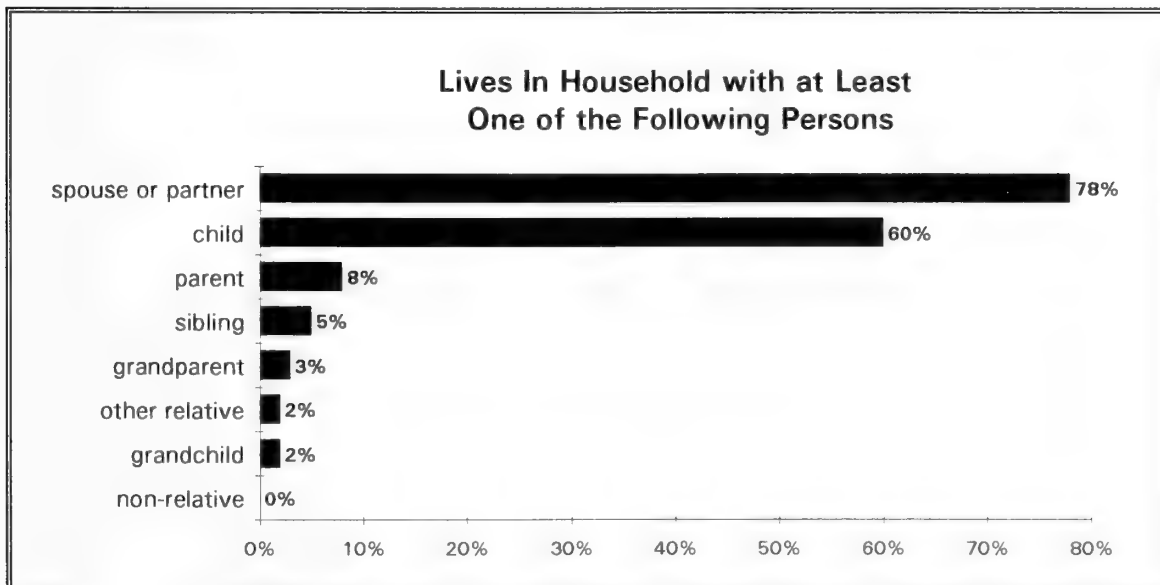
## FAMILY & HOUSEHOLD



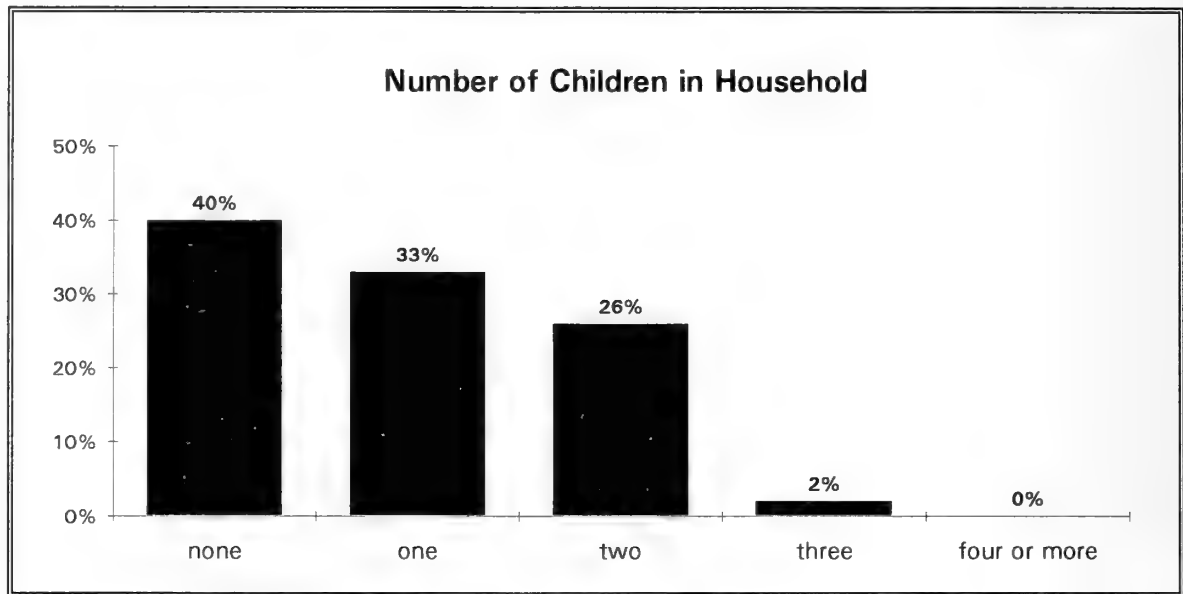
Most former Soviet Union refugees are married, and 7% are widowed. Just 14% are currently single, divorced, or separated.



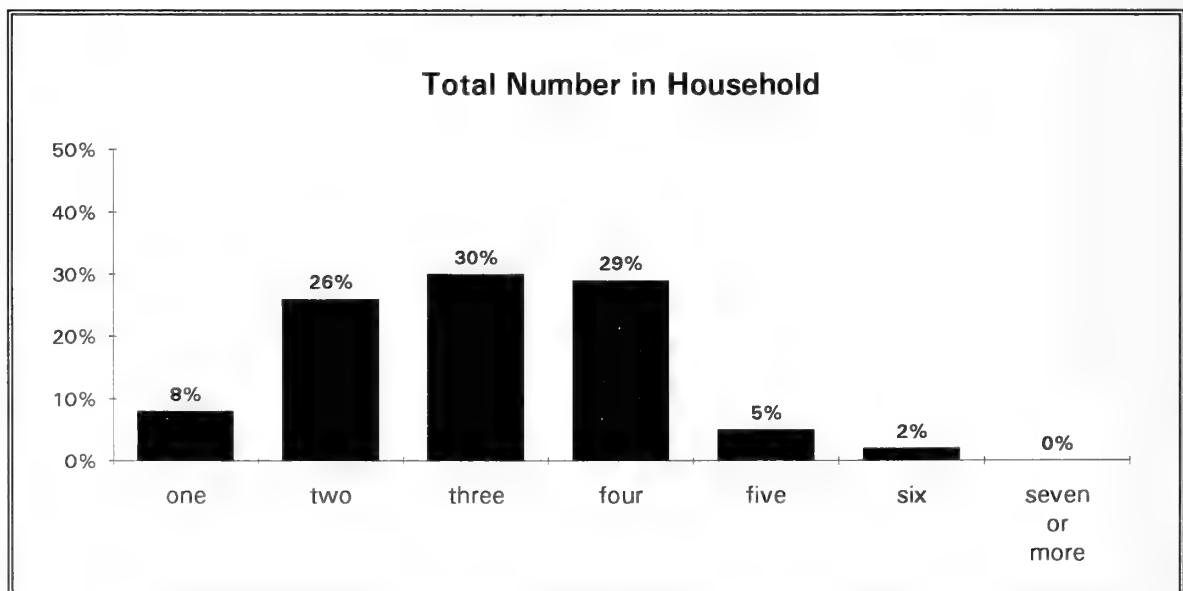
In considering individuals who have been married, former Soviet Union refugees are divorced or separated at about one-third the rate of Texas' overall population. Texans (according to 1990 U.S. Census) and former Soviet Union refugees (Texas Refugee Study) indicate their current marital status as divorced or separated at the percentages shown above. These calculations represent the percentage of individuals whose current marital status is either divorced or separated. Divorced individuals who are currently re-married are not represented in these percentages.



Most former Soviet Union refugees live with their spouse and at least one child.

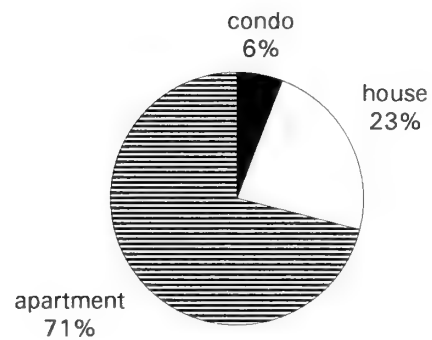


Forty percent of former Soviet Union refugees in Texas do not live with children, but most live with either one or two children.



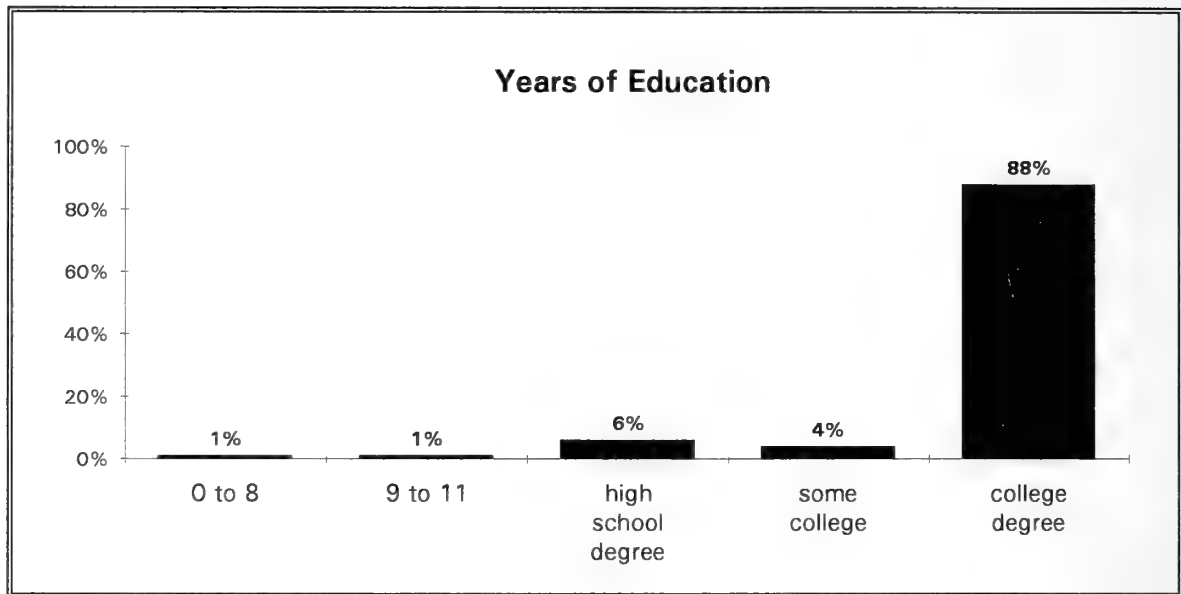
They typically live in households of two, three, or four people.

Type of Dwelling

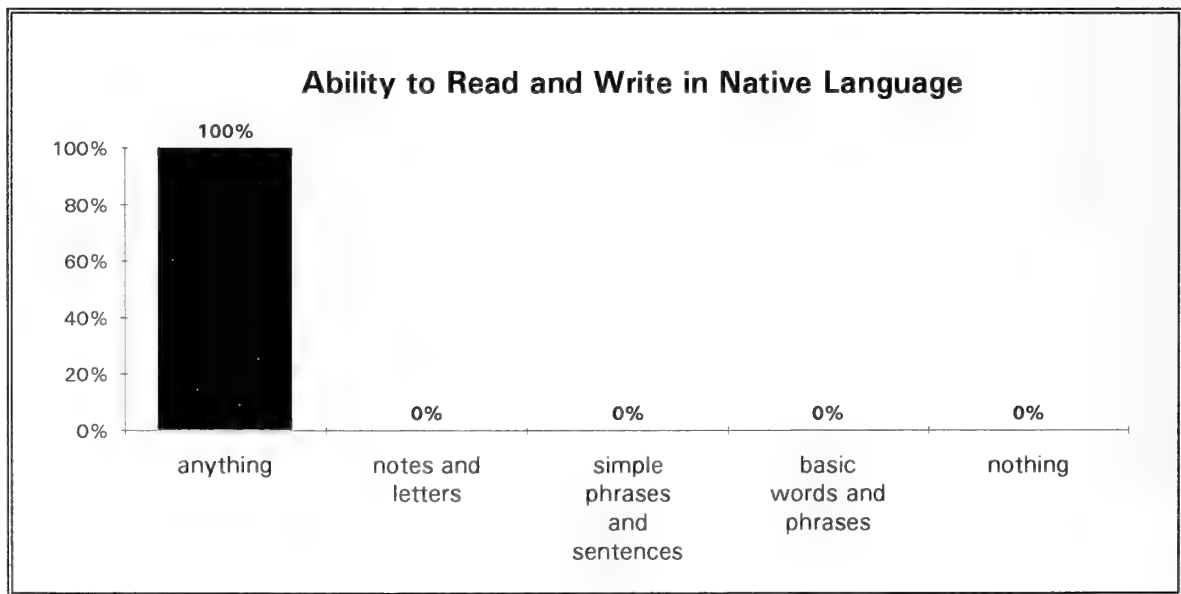


Former Soviet Union refugees live predominantly in apartments.

## EDUCATION & ENGLISH

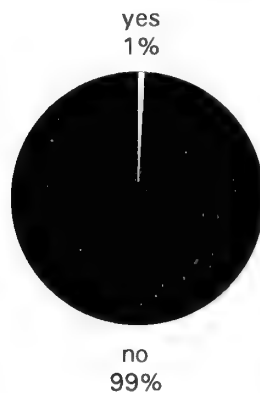


Former Soviet Union refugees tend to be very well educated. Ninety-two percent have been to college and 88% have a college degree.

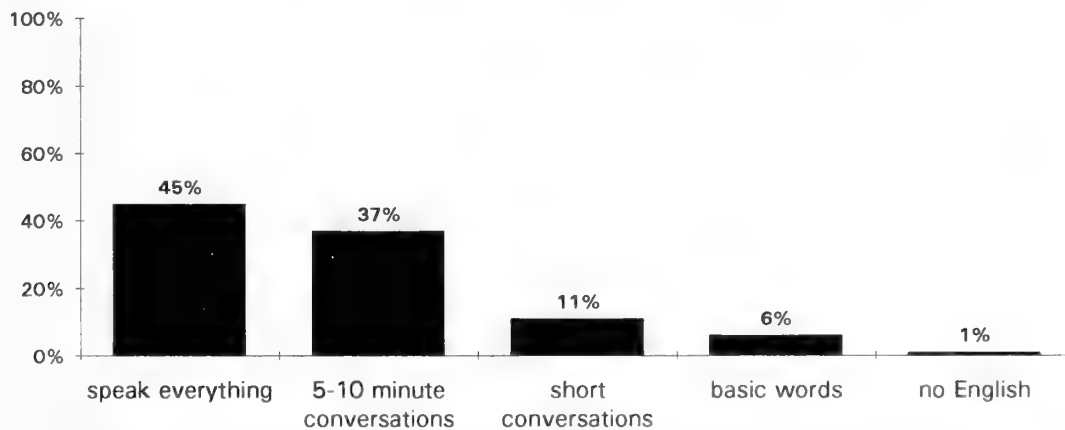


All former Soviet Union refugees surveyed were able to read and write in their native language.

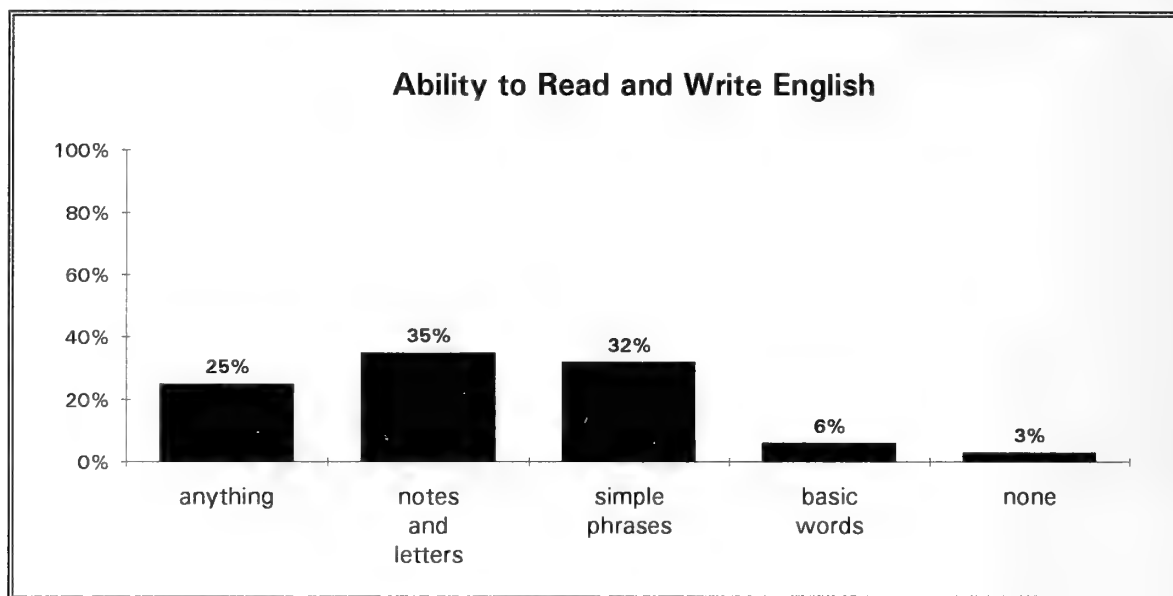


**Has Attended School in the U.S.**

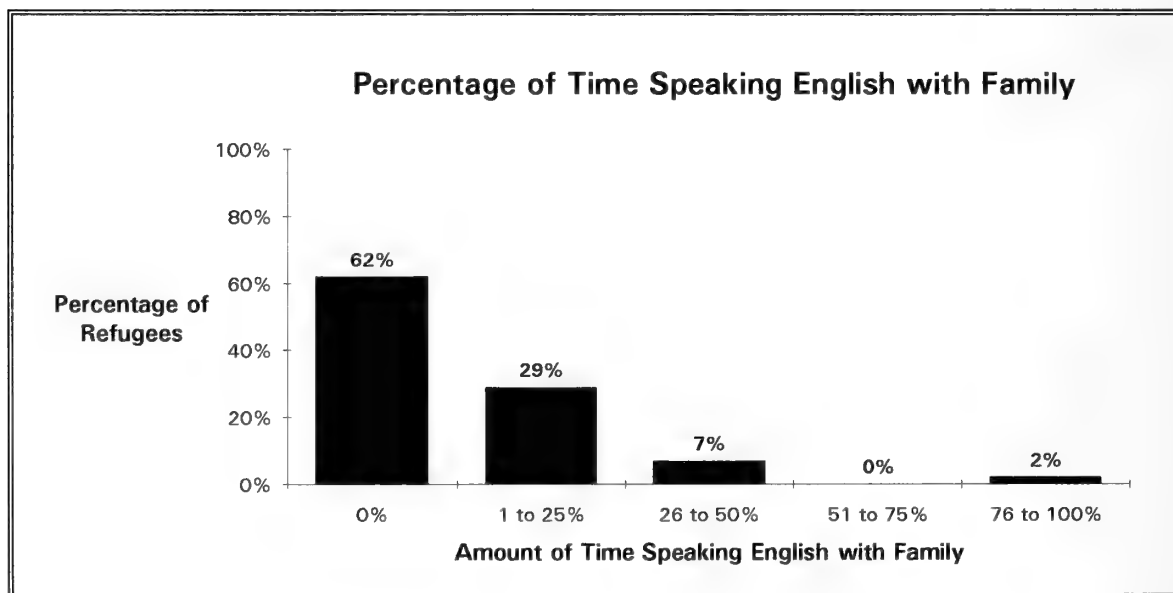
Almost all former Soviet Union refugees received all of their formal education before coming to the U.S. U.S. citizen children (not represented in above chart) of these refugees are typically receiving their education in Texas public or private schools.

**Ability to Speak and Understand English**

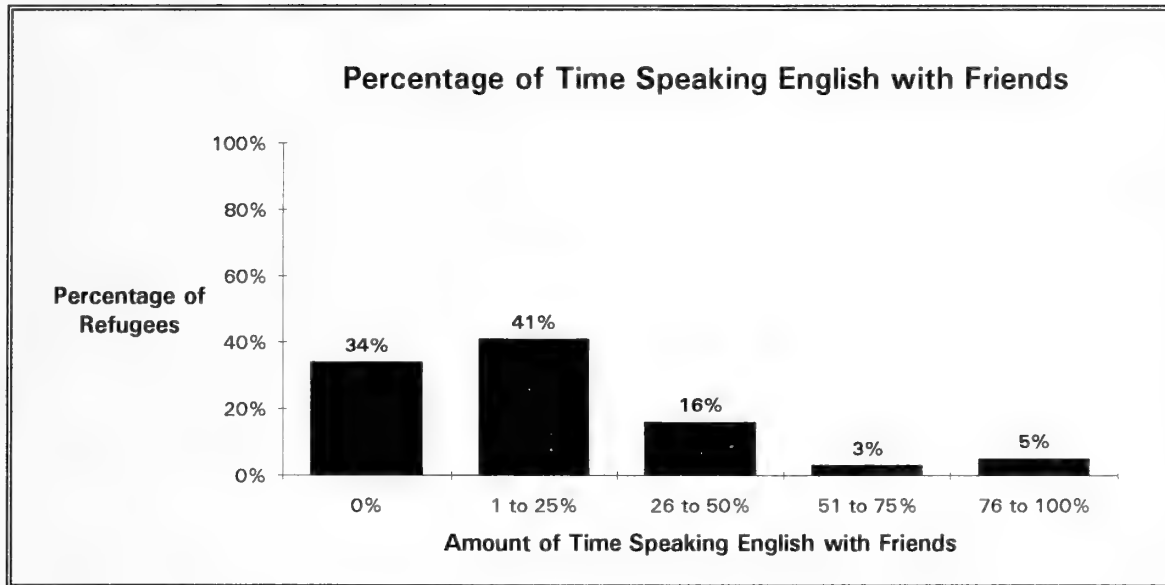
Almost half of former Soviet Union refugees report being fluent in English, and 93% can speak and understand at least short conversations in English.



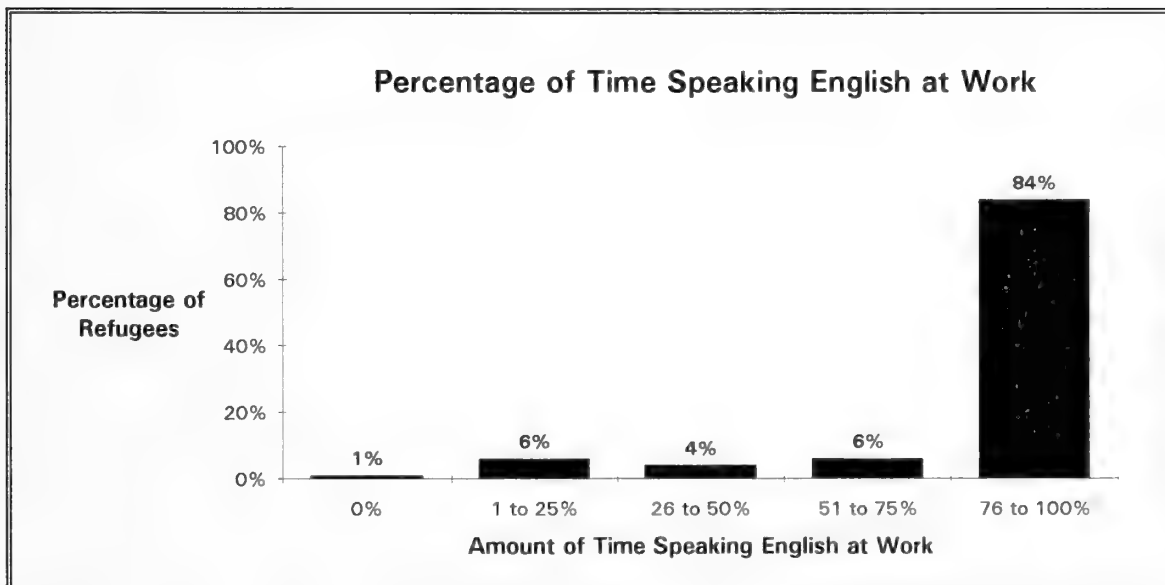
Ninety-one percent of former Soviet Union refugees report being able to read and write at least simple phrases in English.



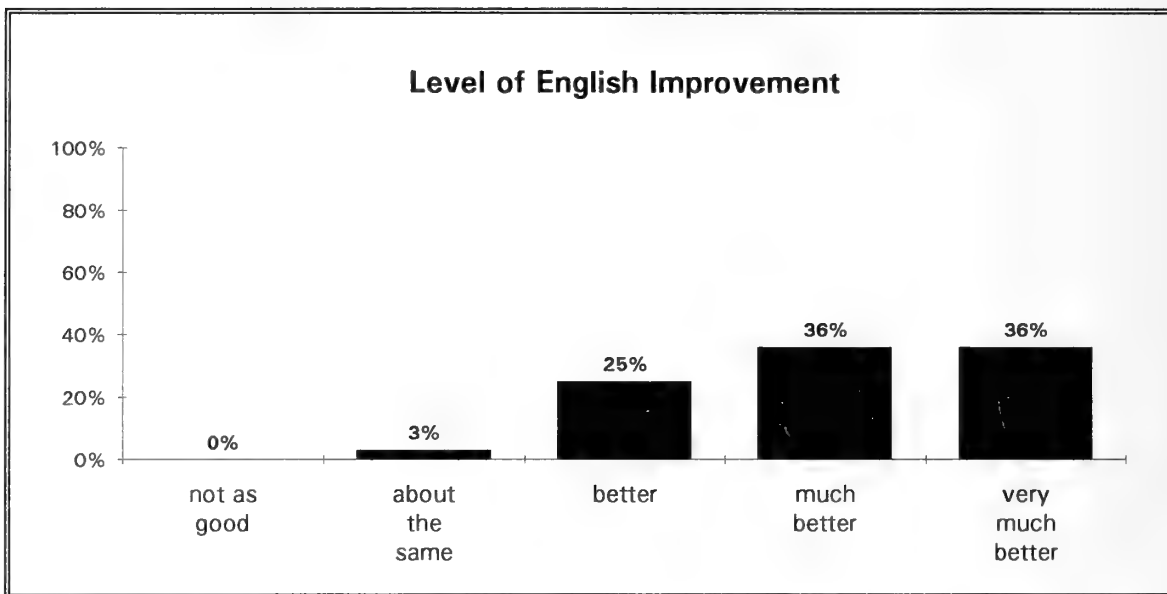
When speaking to family members most former Soviet Union refugees speak their native language. Almost two-thirds report never speaking English with family, and only 2% report speaking English more than half the time with family. On average, former Soviet Union refugees speak English with family members 8% of the time.



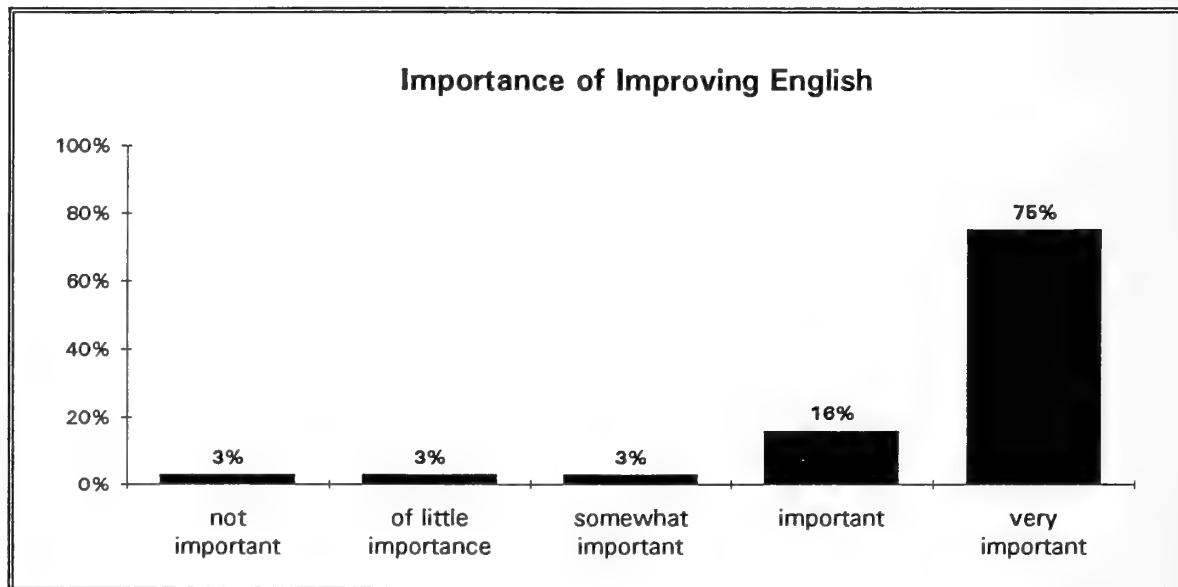
Use of English increases when speaking with friends. Two-thirds report speaking English with friends at least some of the time, but just 8% speak English more than half the time. On average, former Soviet Union refugees speak English with friends 19% of the time.



At work, language use changes dramatically for former Soviet Union refugees. Almost all former Soviet Union refugees report speaking some English at work, and 84% speak English at least three-fourths of the time while working. On average, former Soviet Union refugees speak English 89% of the time while working.



Most former Soviet Union refugees report improvement in their English speaking abilities since living in the U.S.



Most former Soviet Union refugees believe it is important to learn more English.

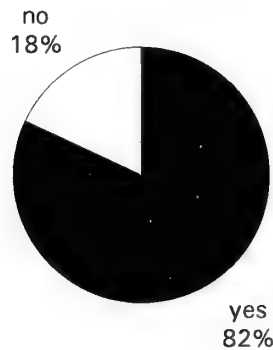
**Common Methods of Learning English**

Talking and Listening to People in the U.S.	87%
TV or Radio in the U.S.	86%
Reading Newspapers, Magazines or Books in the U.S.	76%
ESL or Other Formal Class in the U.S.	72%
School in Native Country	67%
Children in the U.S.	43%
Everyday Conversation in Native Country	6%
School in the U.S.	1%

Former Soviet Union refugees have used and continue to use a wide variety of methods to improve their English skills.

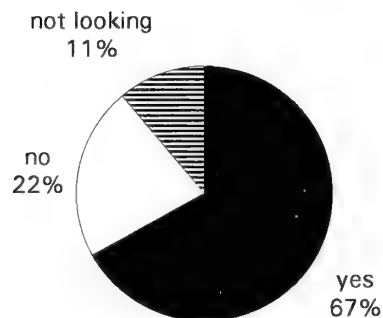
## EMPLOYMENT & INCOME

### Have Worked in the U.S.



Most former Soviet Union refugees have worked in the U.S.

### Currently Working



Two-thirds of former Soviet Union refugees are currently working, and 22% are looking for work. Those not looking for work are typically retired.

## Former Soviet Union Occupational Areas

OCCUPATION	PERCENT	AVERAGE HOURLY WAGE
technician work	17%	\$ 7.29
engineer/computer programmer	15%	\$17.46
education	9%	\$13.47
personal service	9%	\$ 5.78
self-employed/business owner	8%	\$16.11
labor	6%	\$ 8.14
clerical/administrative support	5%	\$13.02
health/social care	5%	\$ 6.07
sales	5%	\$ 4.63
professional/administrative	4%	\$12.81
science/research	4%	*
food preparation/services	3%	*
manufacturing	3%	*
artist/performer	2%	*
auto repair/transportation	2%	*
construction trades	2%	*
freight/stock/materials	2%	*

\* Not enough interviews to calculate wage.

The occupational areas for former Soviet Union refugees are diverse. The most common types of work are technician work, engineering and computer programming, education, and personal services. The best paid occupations, on average, are computer and engineering jobs, business owners and the self employed, and education. (Note that these occupations may only be applicable to the Houston area, and wages are averages for a relatively small number of interviewees. Wages are affected by, among other things, length of employment and skill level.)

## Former Soviet Union Interviewees' Occupations

### Technologist / Technician

health / medical technician	5.3 %
science / lab technician	3.8 %
drafting designer / technician	3.0 %
computer operator / technician	2.3 %
general technician	2.3 %

### Engineer / Computer Programmer

engineer	9.1 %
computer programmer	4.5 %
systems analyst	.8 %
database administrator	.8 %

### Personal Service Occupation

hair stylist	3.0 %
florist	1.5 %
designer	1.5 %
laundry / dry cleaner	.8 %
child care	.8 %
masseur	.8 %
general	.8 %

### Education

translator / interpreter	5.3 %
teacher	2.3 %
teacher's aid / assist	1.5 %

### Business Owner / Self-Employed

general	7.6 %
---------	-------

### Labor

maintenance / repair	2.3 %
general manual labor	2.3 %
custodial / cleaning	1.5 %

### Clerical / Administrative Support

assistant	3.0 %
clerk	2.3 %

### Salesperson / Sales Clerk

salesperson / trader	4.5 %
cashier / checker / sale clerk	.8 %



Health Care / Social Service Practitioner

health / medical assistant	3.0 %
care taker	1.5 %

Manager / Administrator / Professional

accountant / payroll	2.3 %
manager / supervisor	1.5 %

Science / Research Industry

scientist / researcher	3.8 %
------------------------	-------

General Manufacturing

machinist / machine operator	.8 %
assembly	.8 %
general manufacturing	.8 %
fabricator	.8 %

Food Preparation / Processing / Distribution

sacker / packer	1.5 %
food prep / assistant	.8 %
cook / baker	.8 %

Artist

Musician	1.5 %
Artist	.8 %

Construction Trades

electrician	.8 %
assistant (general)	.8 %

Freight Stock and Material Movers

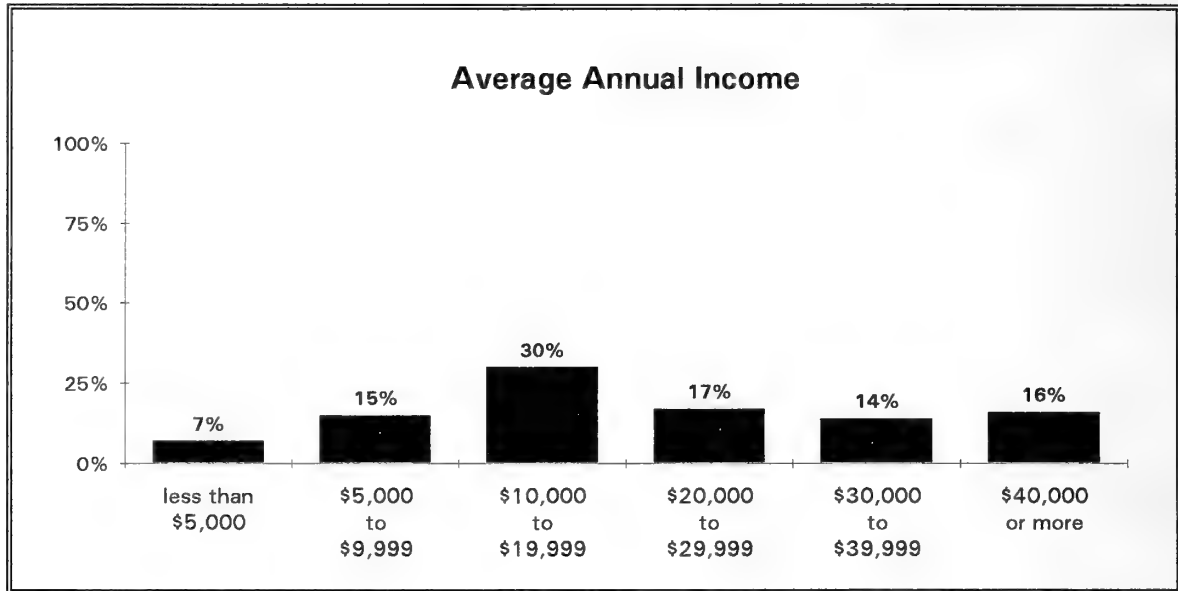
warehouse/ shipping/ receiving/ supply	.8 %
delivery	.8 %

Motor / Transportation Work

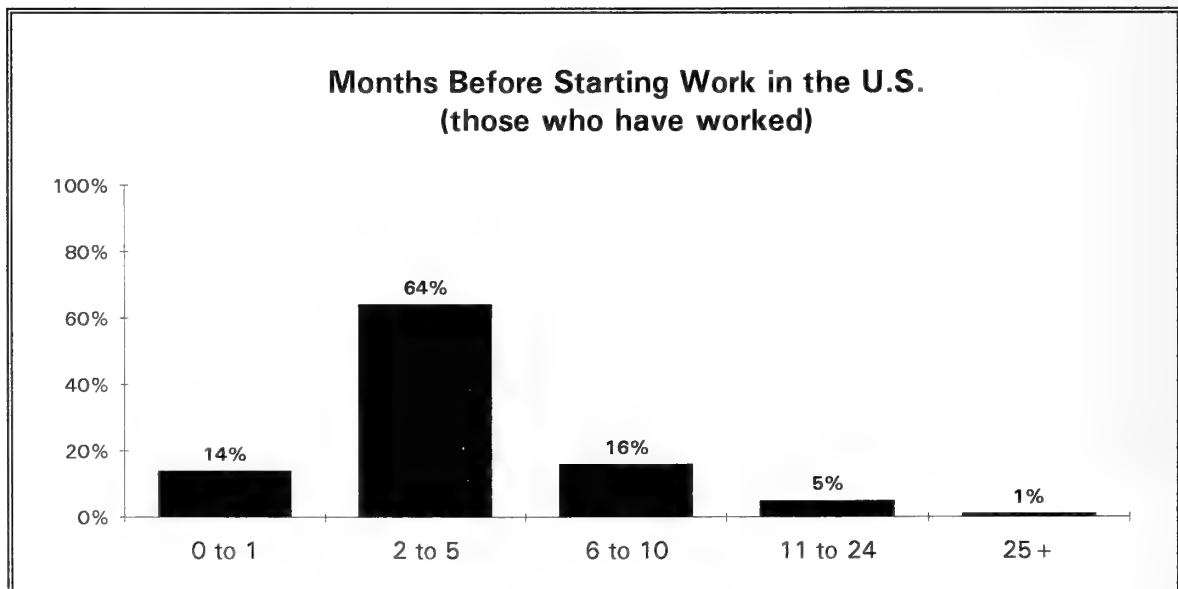
mechanic	.8 %
auto-body repair	.8 %

Miscellaneous

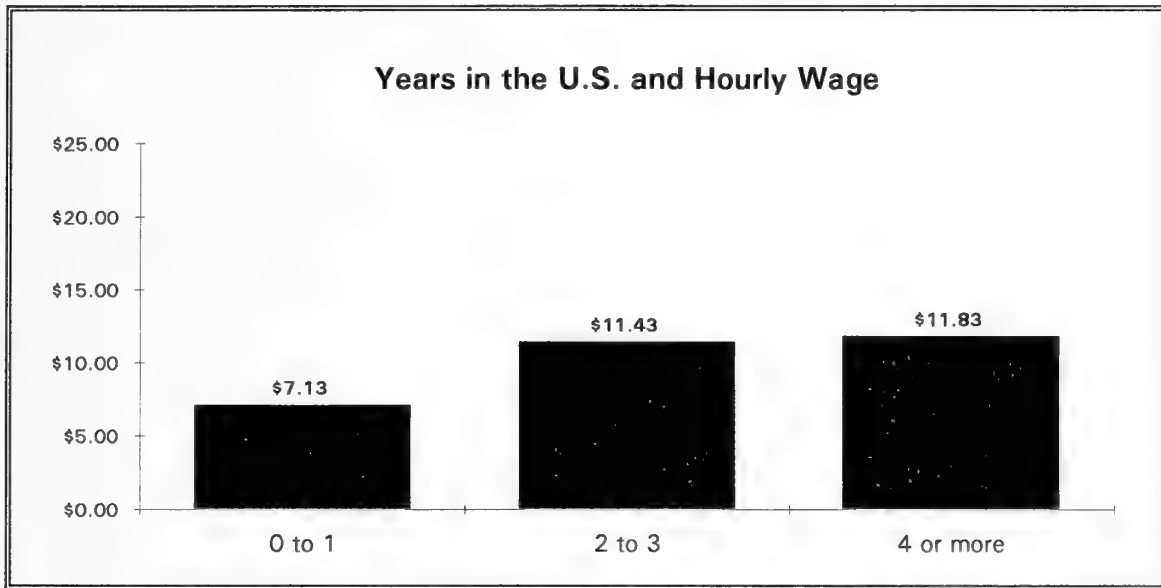
general help	.8 %
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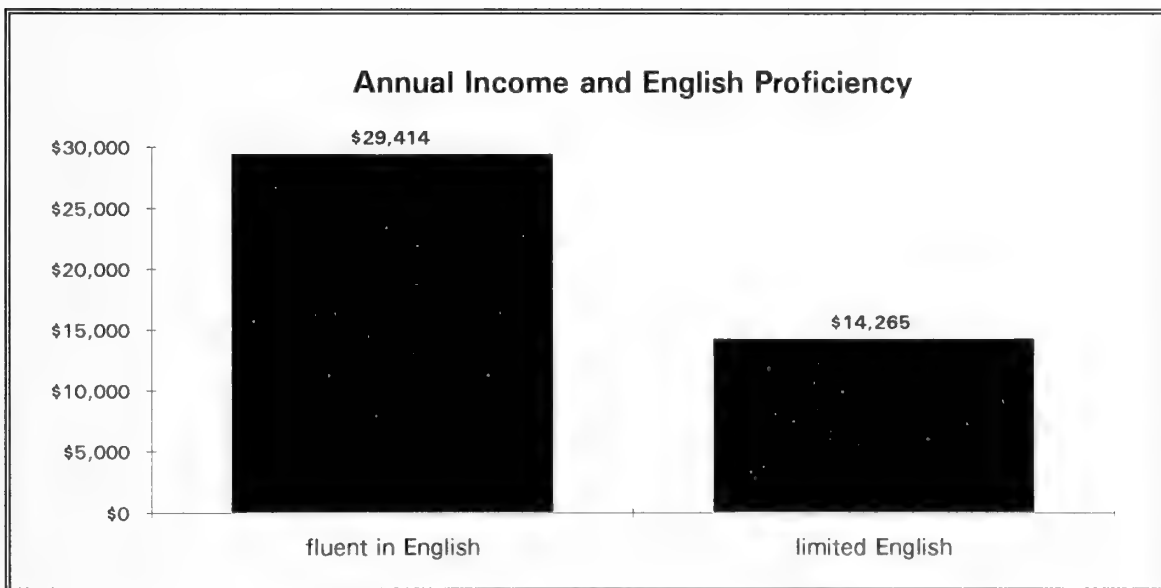
The average annual income of a working former Soviet Union refugee was \$23,076 in 1992. Half of working former Soviet Union refugees earned more than \$18,000, and half earned less. (Incomes were calculated for former Soviet Union refugees arriving in the U.S. before 1992 and earning some income in 1992.)



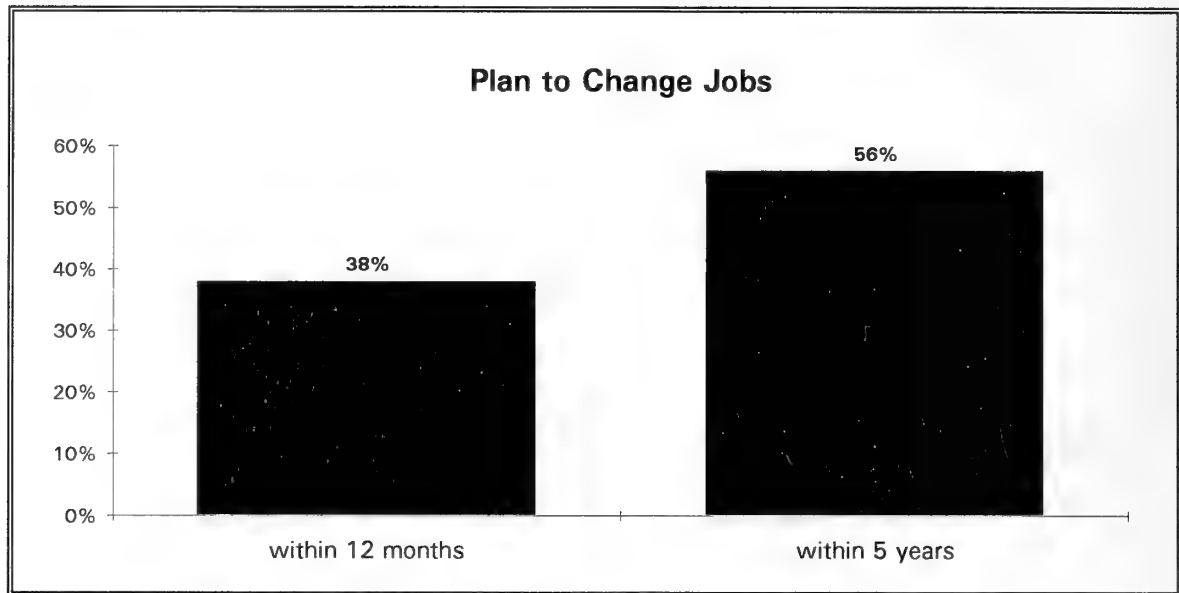
Eighty percent of former Soviet Union refugees (of those who have worked in the U.S.) started their first job within five months of living in the U.S.



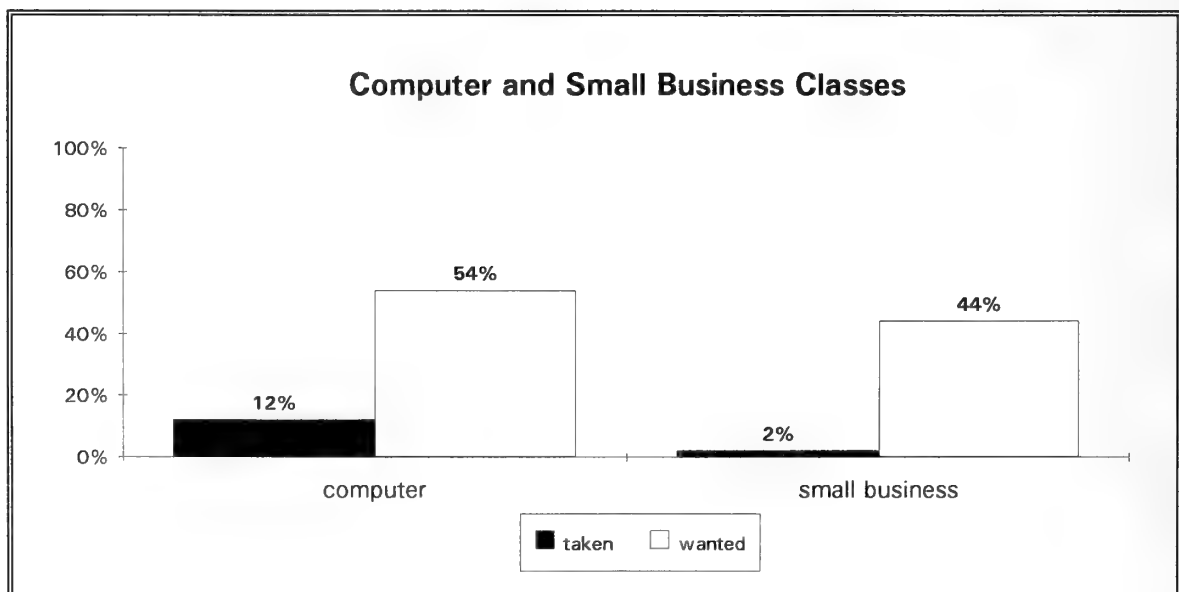
Average wages for former Soviet Union refugees increased after a couple years in the U.S. and then typically stabilized.



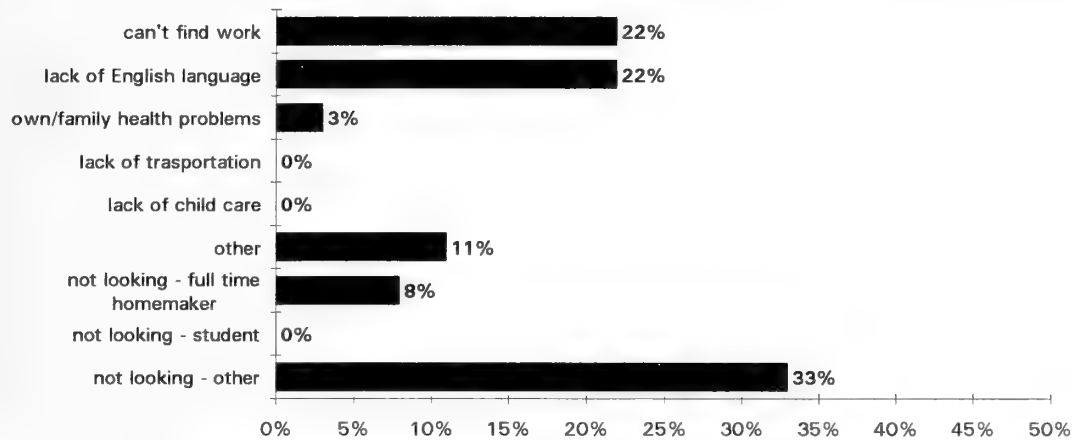
Average annual income is dramatically higher for former Soviet Union refugees fluent in English. (Incomes were calculated for former Soviet Union refugees arriving in the U.S. before 1992 and earning some income in 1992.)



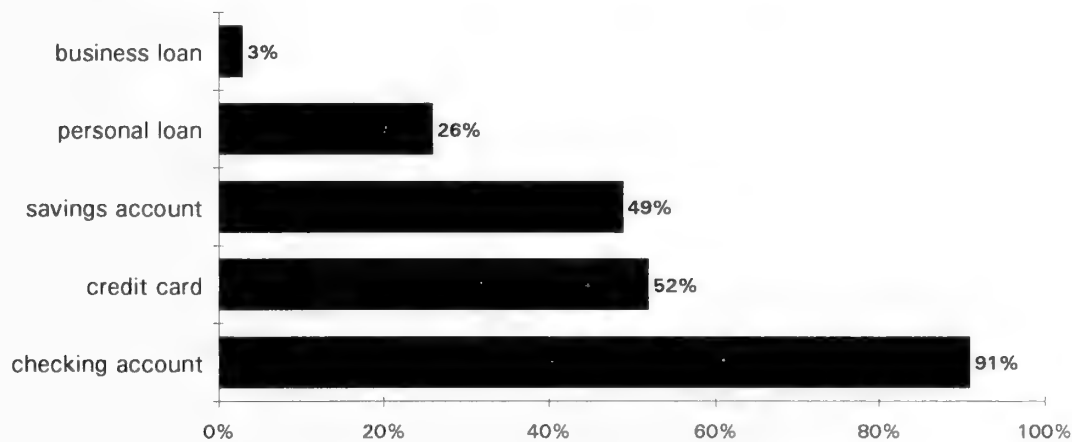
More than one in three former Soviet Union refugees plan to change jobs in the next 12 months. More than half anticipate changing jobs over the next five years.



Twelve percent of former Soviet Union refugees have taken a computer class, and more than half would like to take a computer class. Just 2% have taken a class on small business, and 44% would like to take one.

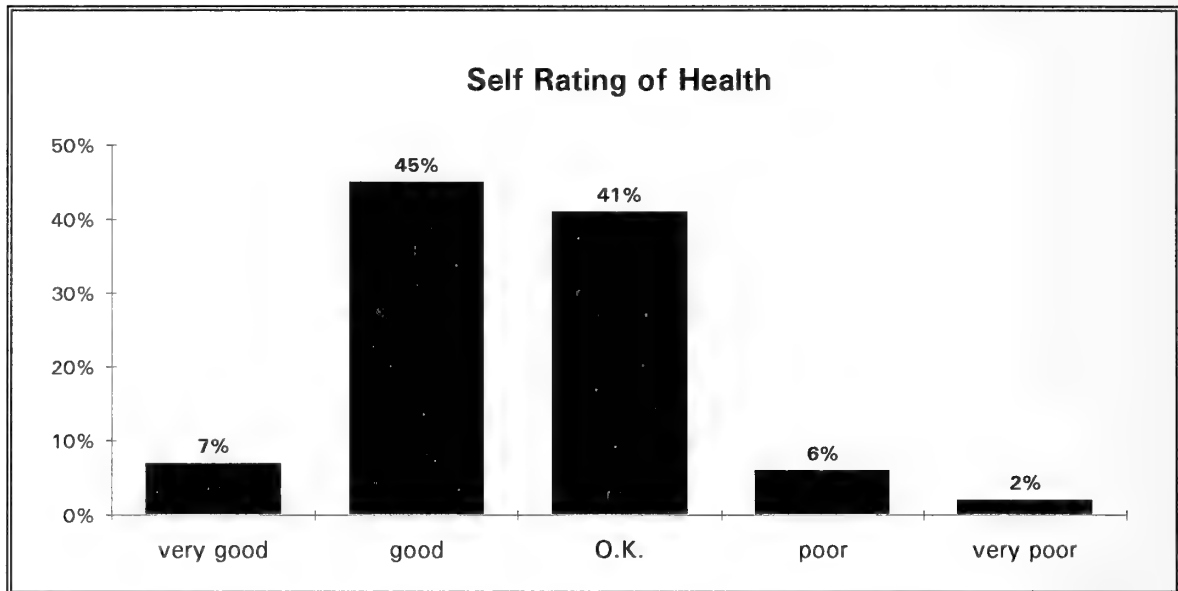
**Reason for Never Working in the U.S.**

Former Soviet Union refugees who have not worked in the U.S. cite the inability to find work, lack of English, and "other" as the most important reasons. Most of the "other" is believed to be retirement.

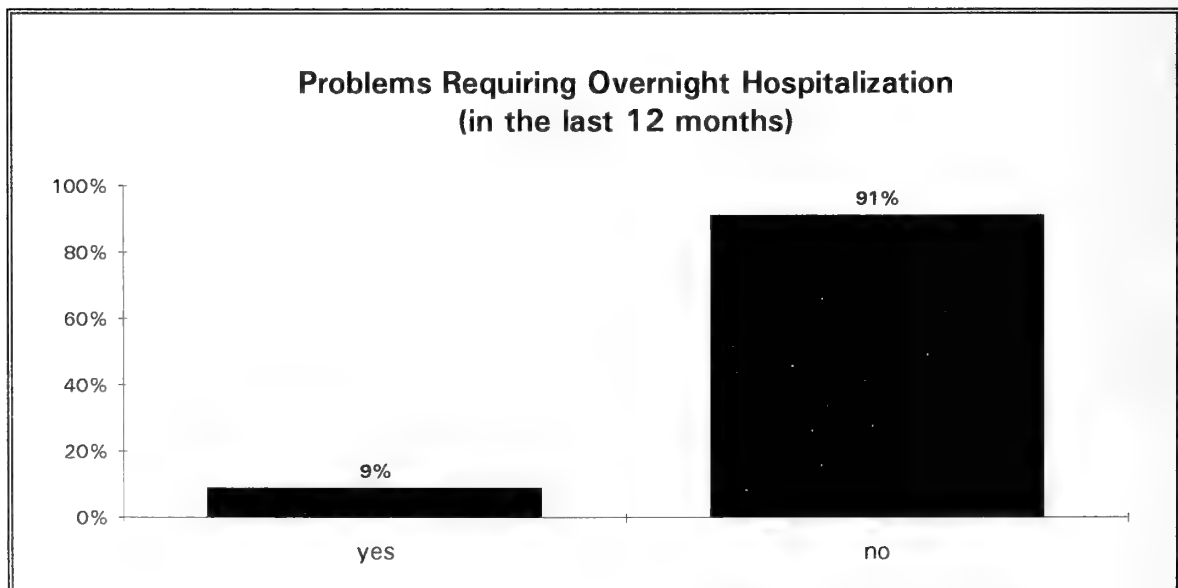
**Percent with Banking Services**

Nine of ten former Soviet Union refugees have a checking account, and about half have a savings account and a credit card. About one quarter have a personal loan, and 3% have a business loan.

## HEALTH

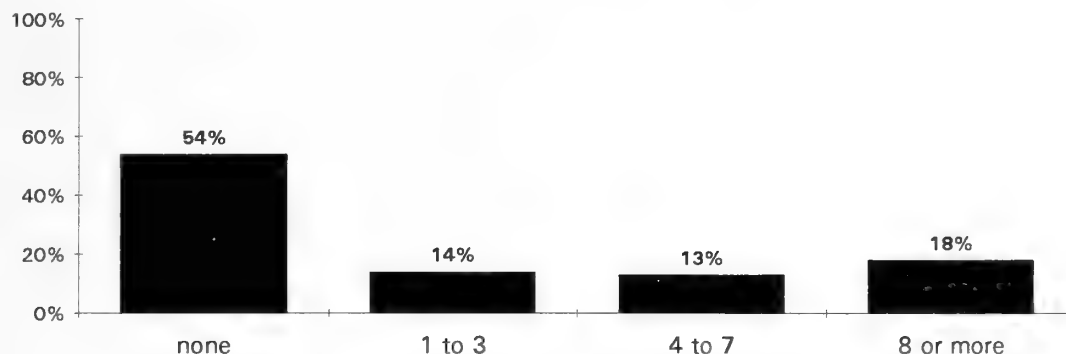


The majority of former Soviet Union refugees consider their health to be O.K. or good, 7% consider their health to be very good, and 8% rate it as poor or very poor.



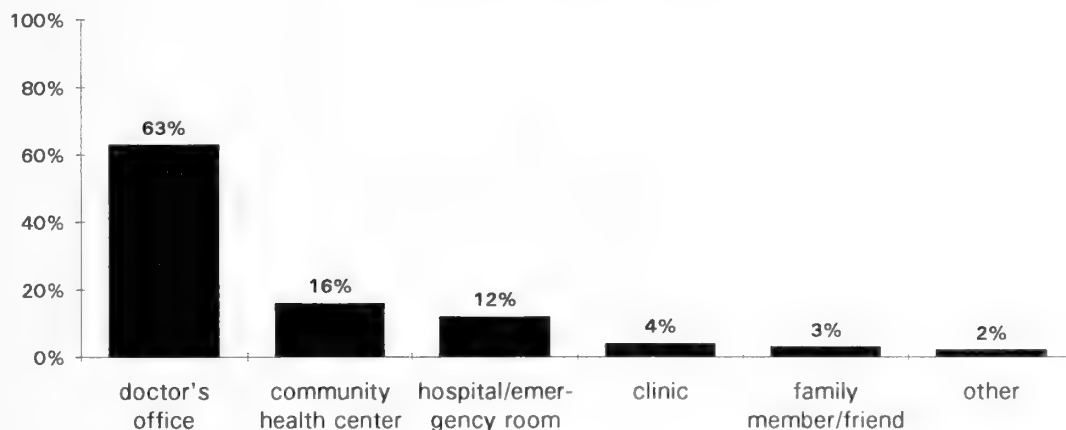
Nine percent of former Soviet Union refugees spent at least one night in the hospital during the previous 12 months (includes childbirth).

**Number of Days Unable to Perform  
Daily Activities Due to Illness  
(in the last 12 months)**

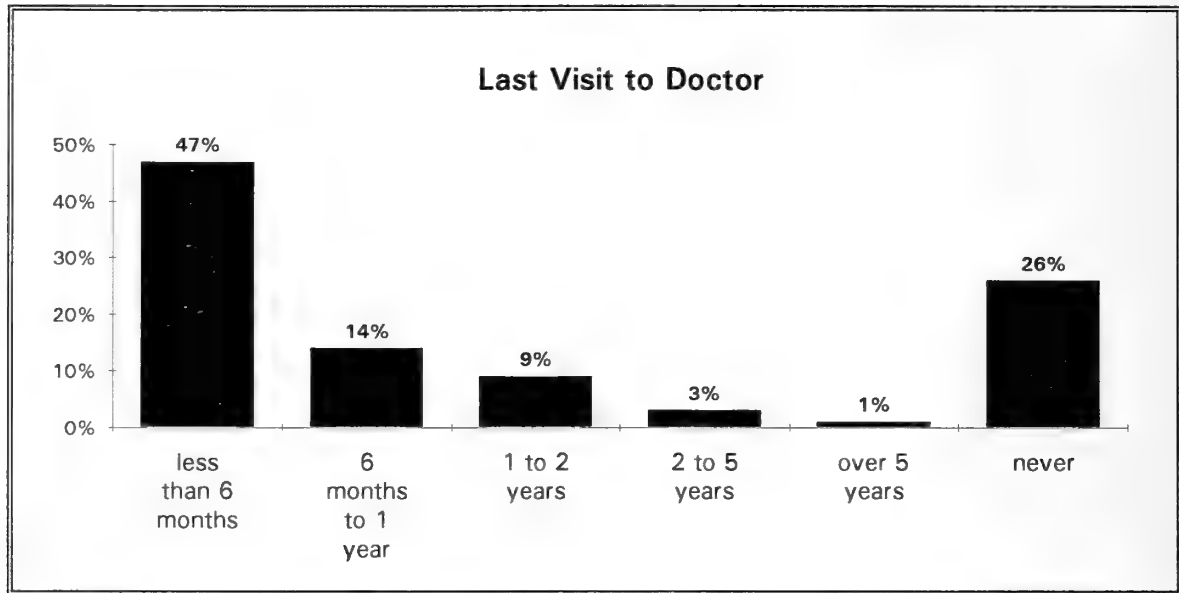


Half of former Soviet Union refugees reported not missing daily activities such as work due to illness during the past year. However, 18% reported missing eight or more days.

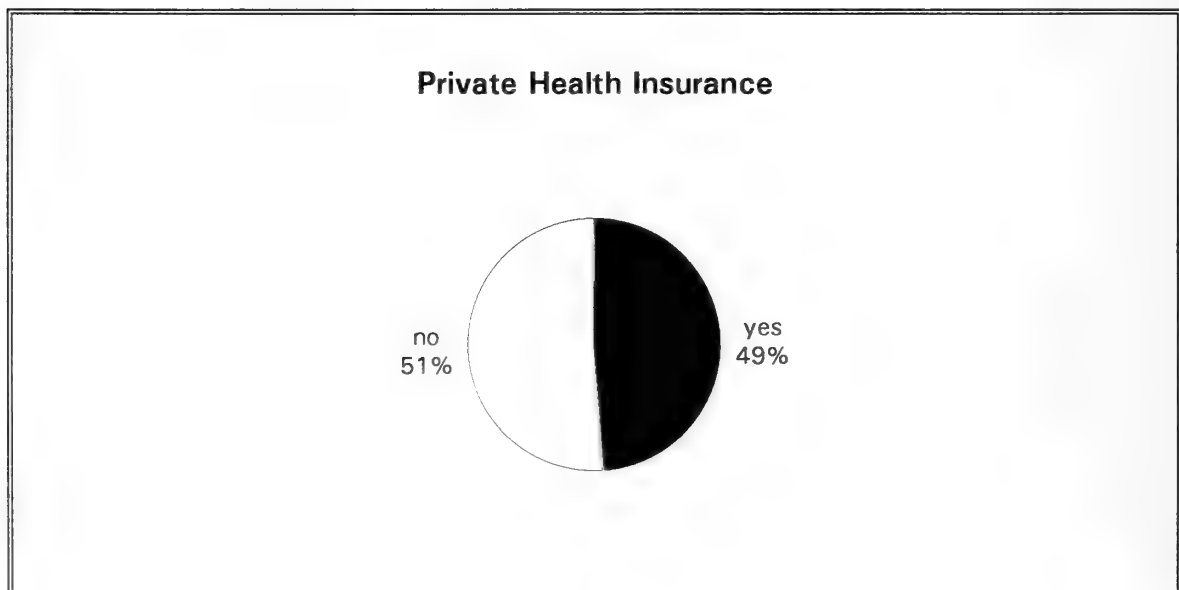
**Medical Care / Advice**



When in need of medical care or advice, most former Soviet Union refugees go to a doctor's office.

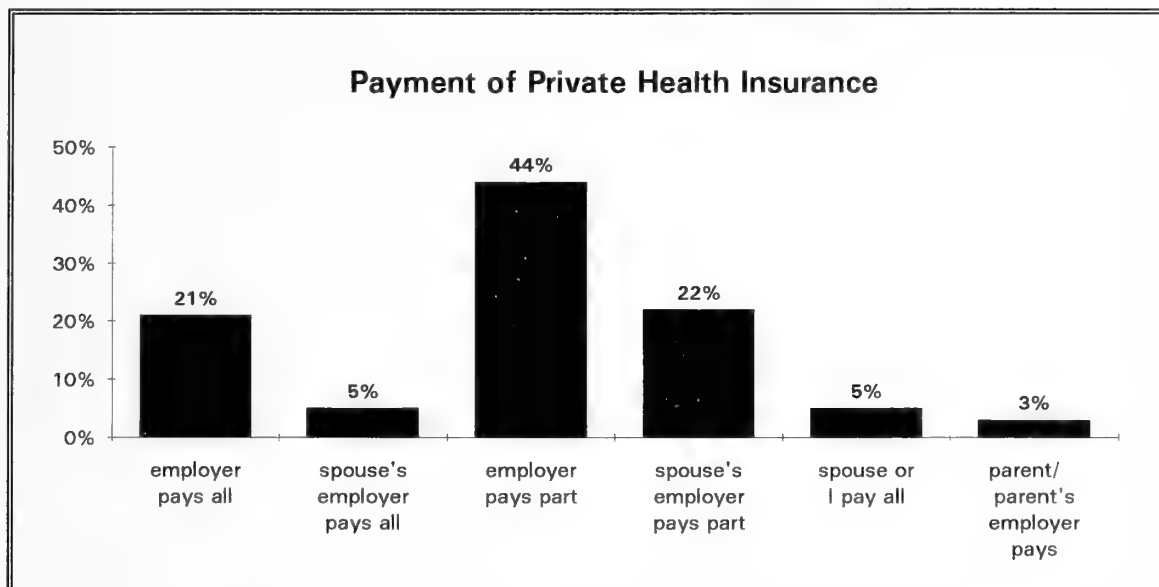


Sixty-two percent of former Soviet Union refugees had been to see a doctor in the previous 12 months. One in four had never been to see a doctor in the U.S.

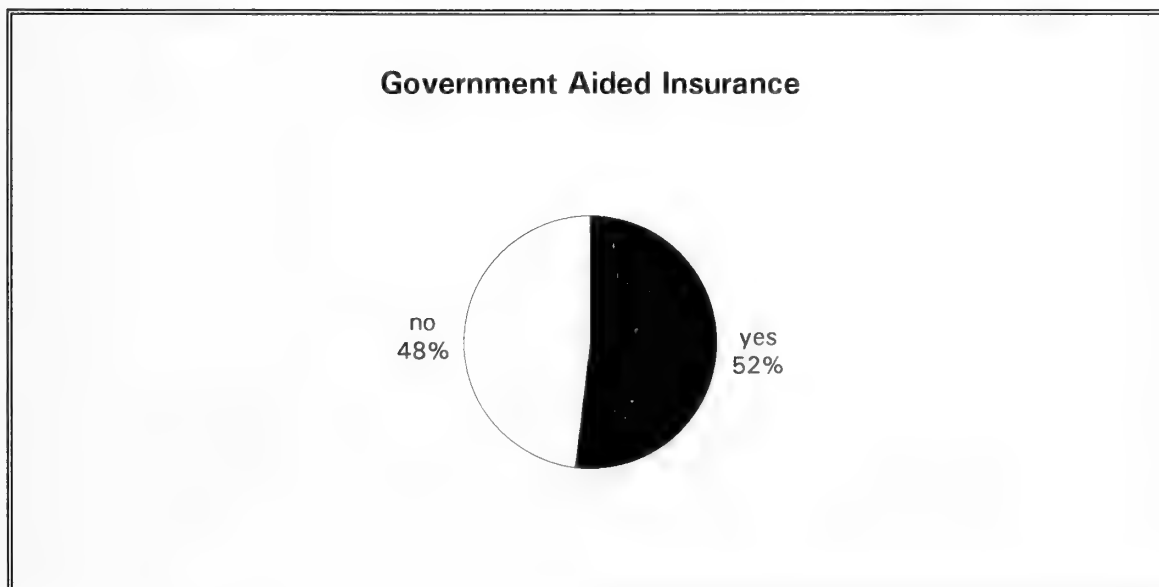


Half of former Soviet Union refugees reported having private health insurance.

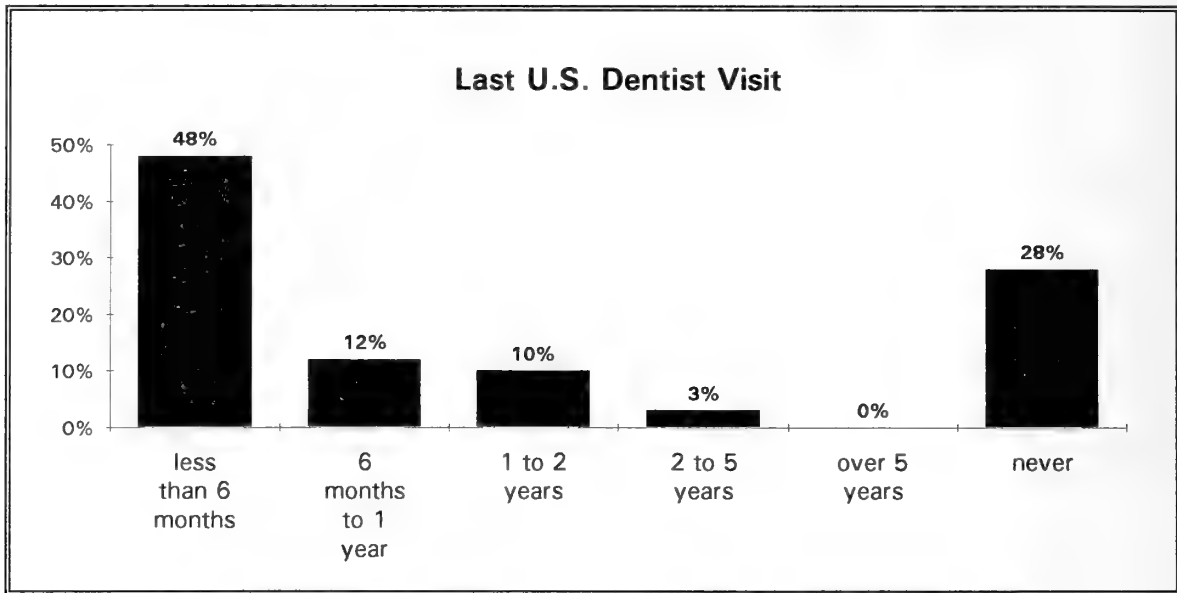




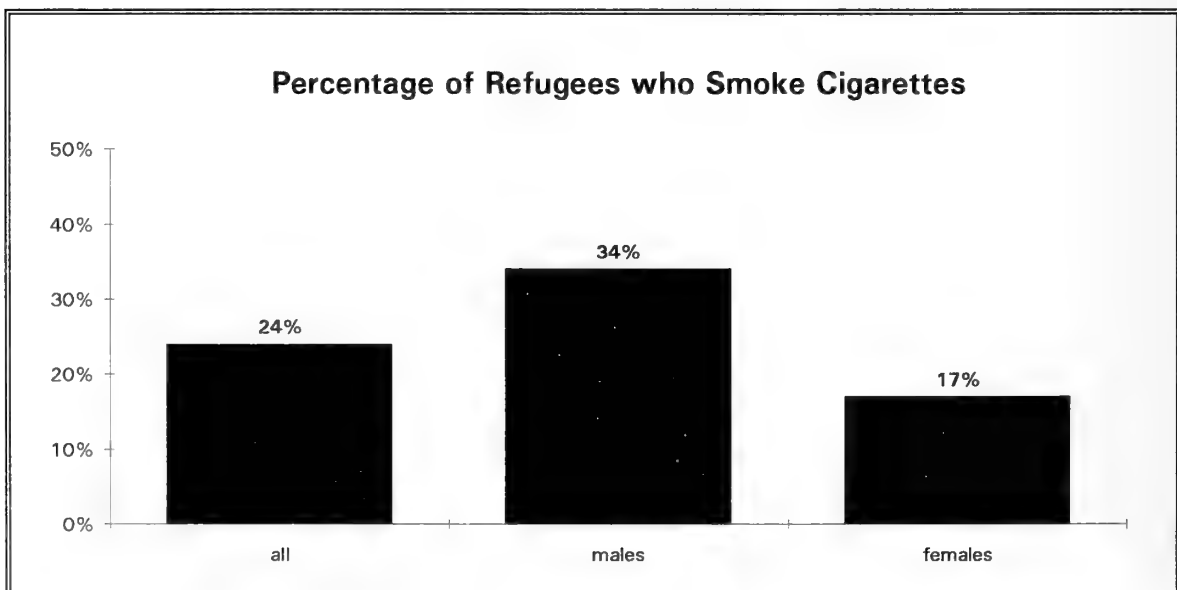
Of those with private insurance, most former Soviet Union refugees have employers who pay for part or all of their insurance.



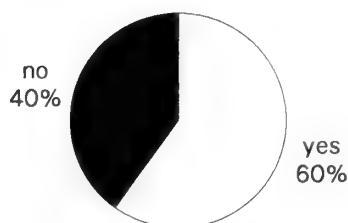
Of the 51% of former Soviet Union refugees that do not have private health insurance, 52% have government assisted health insurance such as Medicare, Medicaid, or County Indigent Health Care. However, 24% of all former Soviet Union refugees have no health insurance.



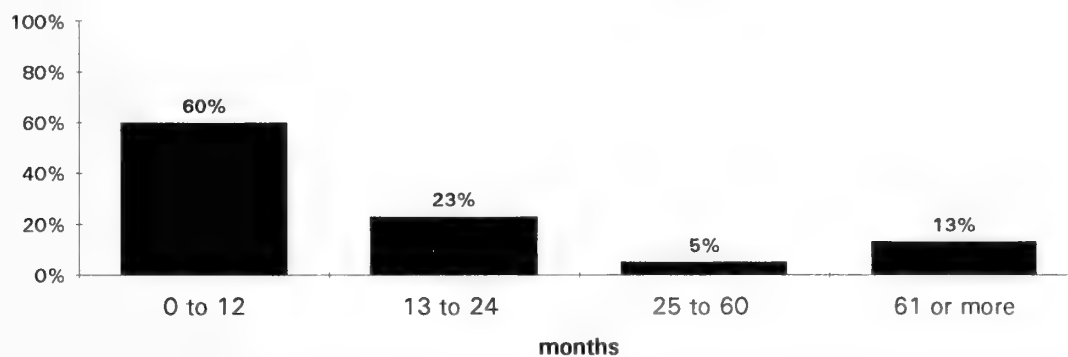
Approximately half of former Soviet Union refugees have been to the dentist in the past 12 months, but 28% have never been to a dentist in the U.S.



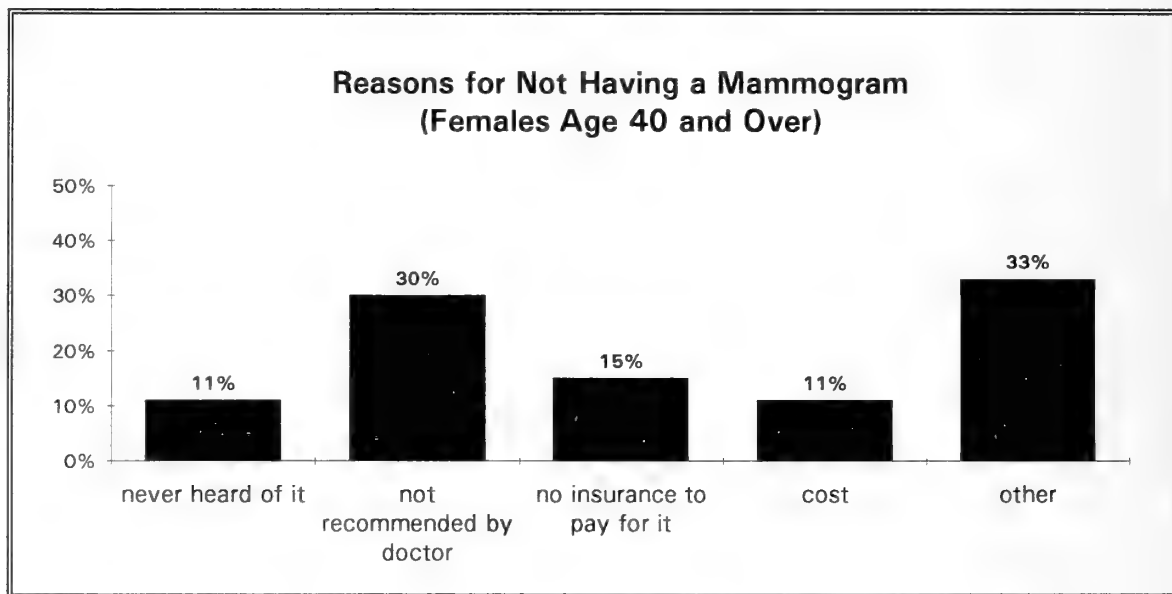
Overall, about the same percentage of former Soviet Union refugees smoke as does the general population of Texas. However, male former Soviet Union refugees are twice as likely to smoke as females.

**Former Soviet Union Mammogram Screening  
(Females 40 and Over)**

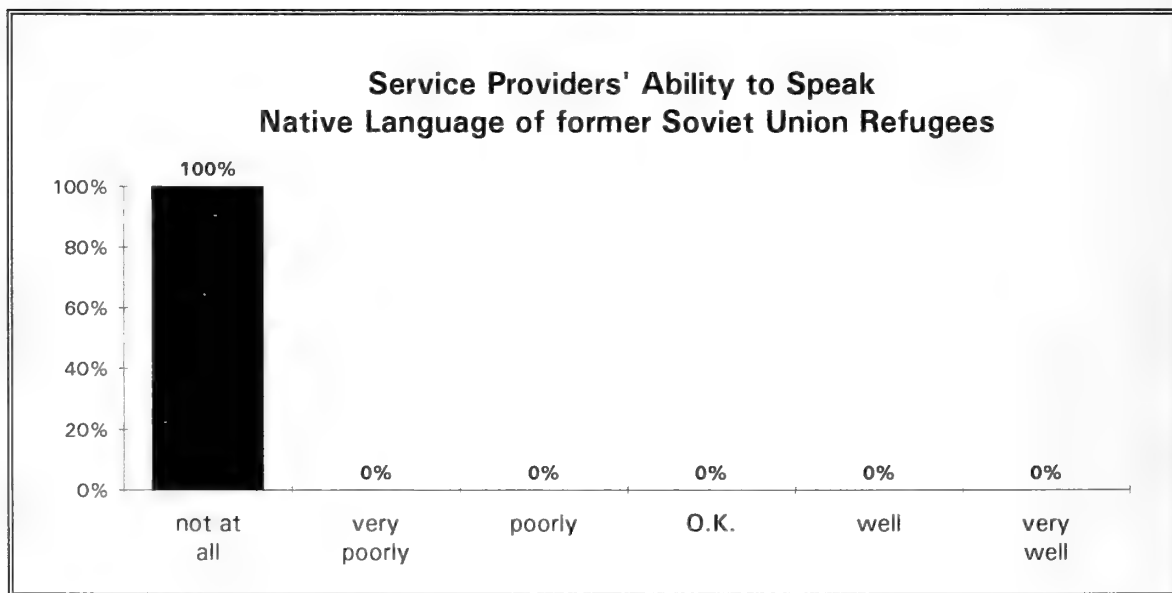
Sixty-percent of former Soviet Union refugee women age 40 and over have had mammogram screenings. This is lower than the rate of Texas women 40 and older, who have had screenings at a rate of 70% (Texas Department of Health).

**Months Since Last Mammogram  
(Females Age 40 and Over  
who have been Screened)**

Of former Soviet Union refugee women who have had screenings, most had them in the previous 12 months.

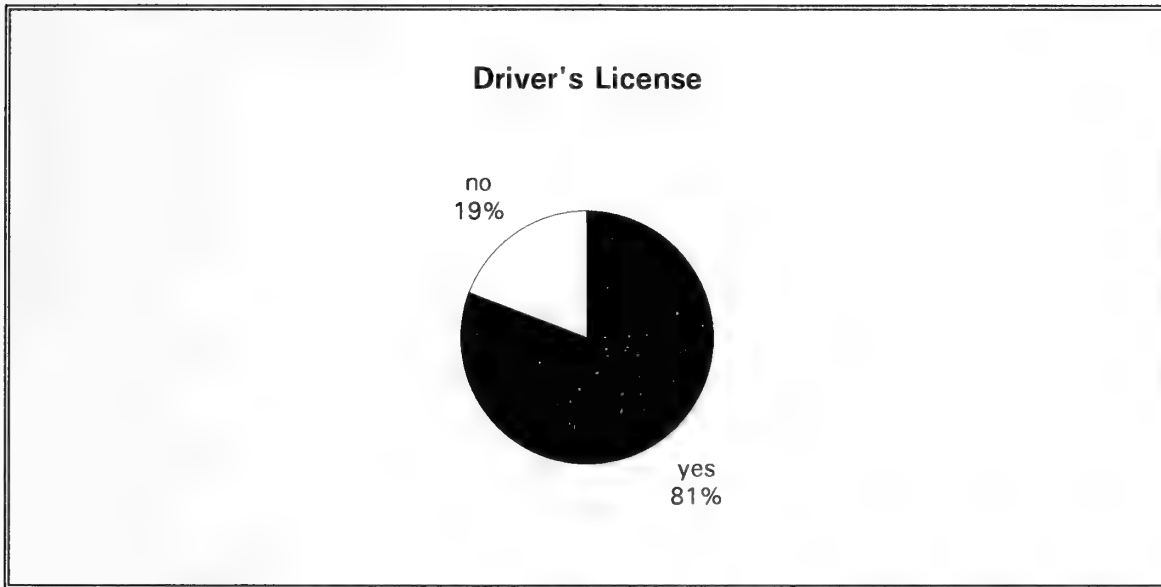


There are a variety of reasons that 40% of former Soviet Union refugees women haven't had a mammogram.

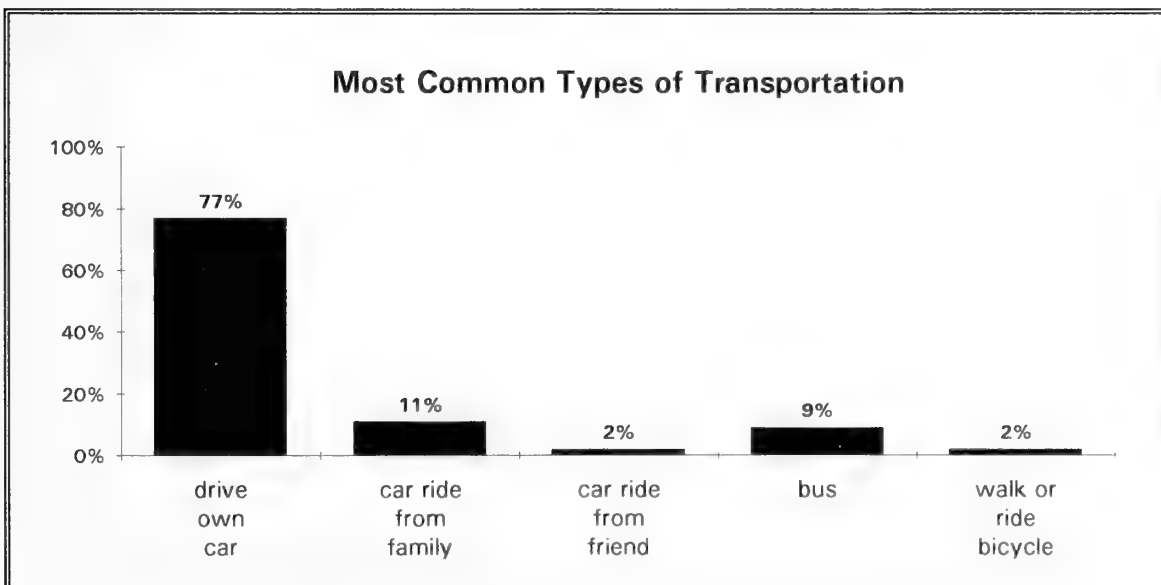


Former Soviet Union refugees need to know English because service providers rarely speak Russian.

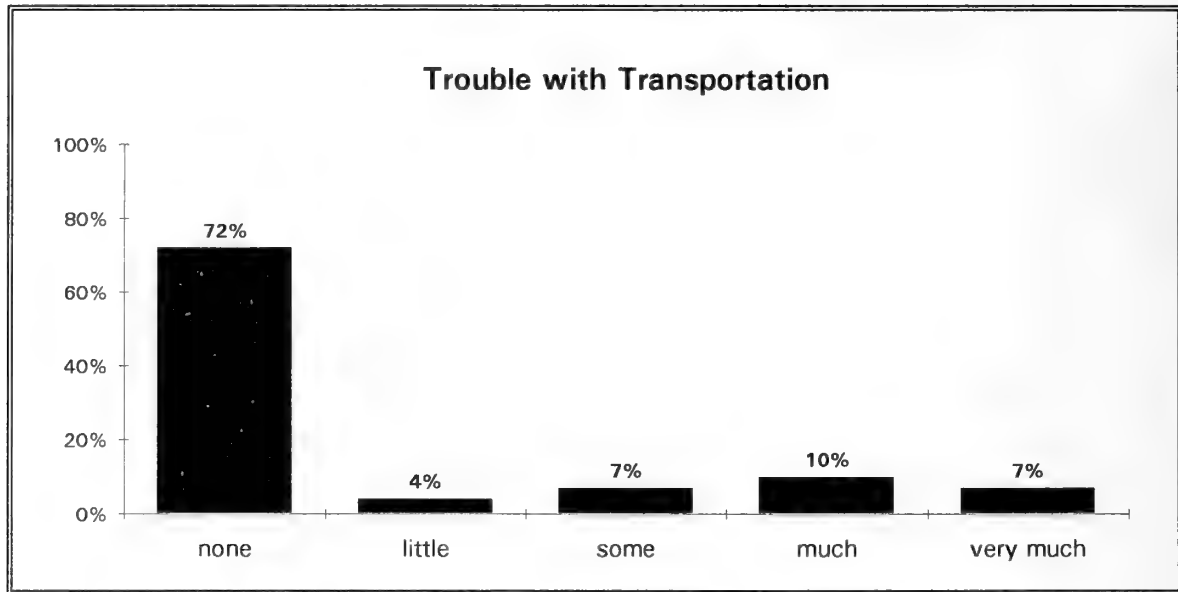
## TRANSPORTATION



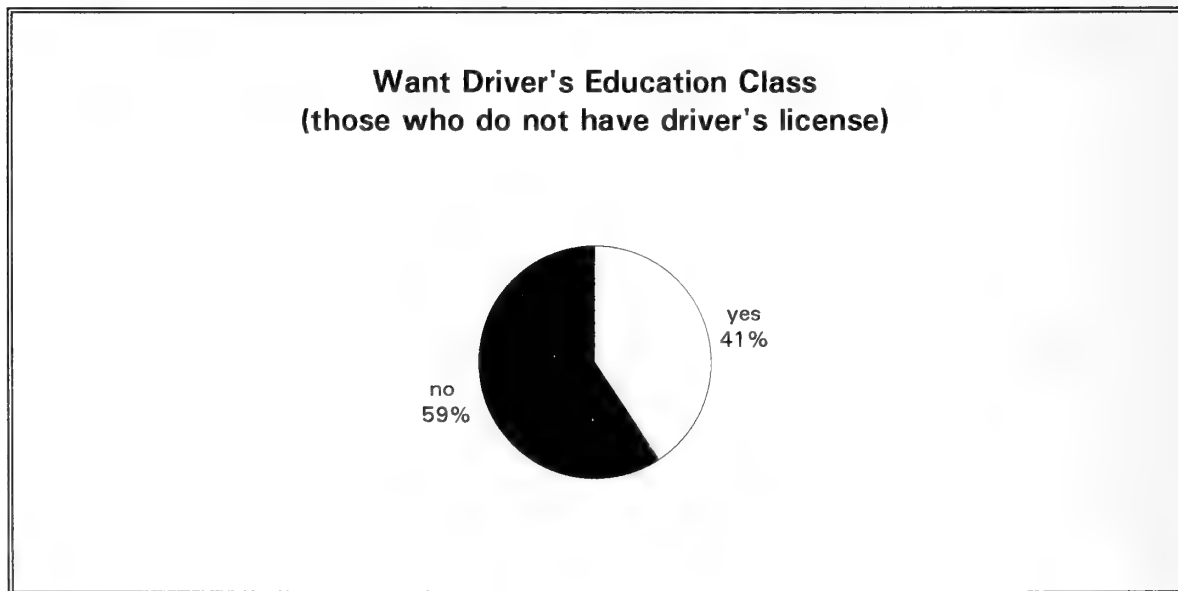
The majority of former Soviet Union refugees have a driver's license.



Most former Soviet Union refugees drive their own car. Many ride with a family member or take the bus.



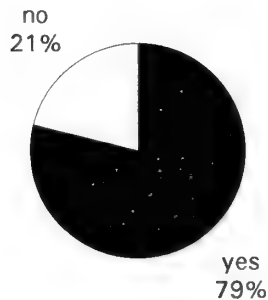
The majority of former Soviet Union refugees do not have a problem with transportation. However, one-fourth have at least some trouble.



Two of five former Soviet Union refugees without a driver's license want one.

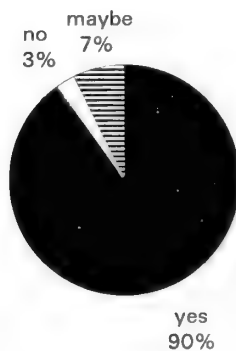
## CITIZENSHIP

### U.S. Citizenship (those who are eligible to apply)



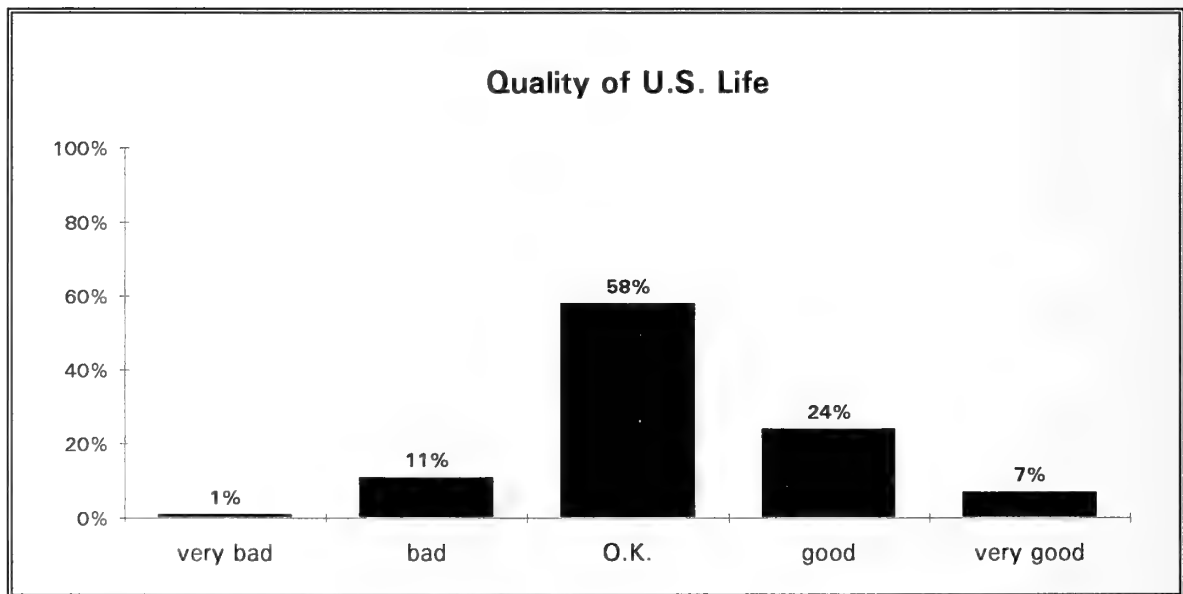
Of those former Soviet Union refugees who have been in the U.S. at least five years and are thus eligible to apply for naturalization, 79% have become U.S. citizens.

### Plans to Apply for Citizenship (those who are not currently citizens)



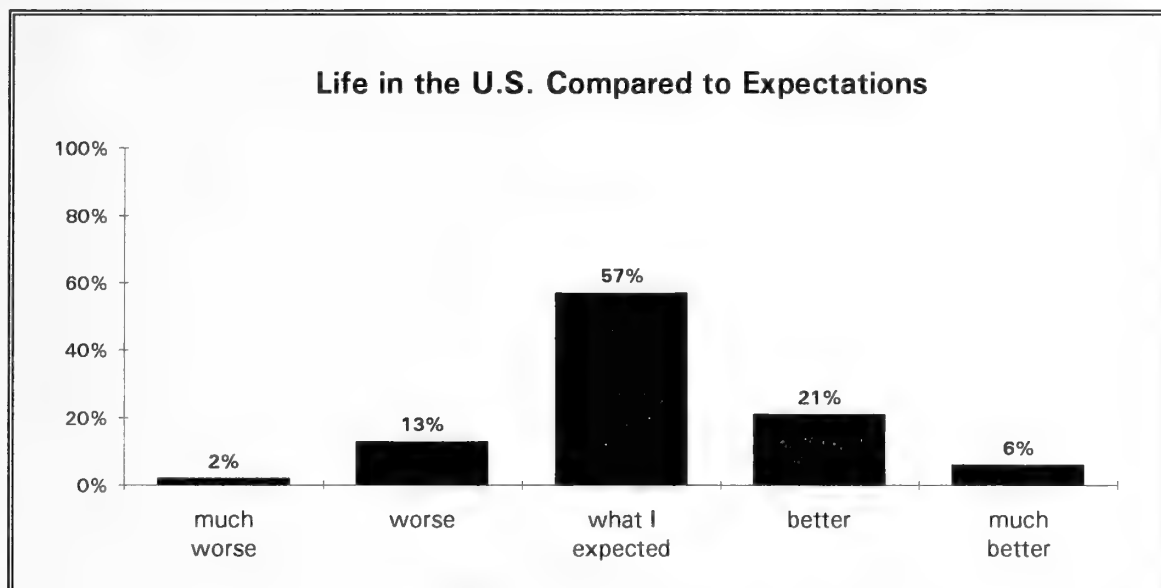
Former Soviet Union refugees that have not yet naturalized usually plan to do so.

## QUALITY OF LIFE

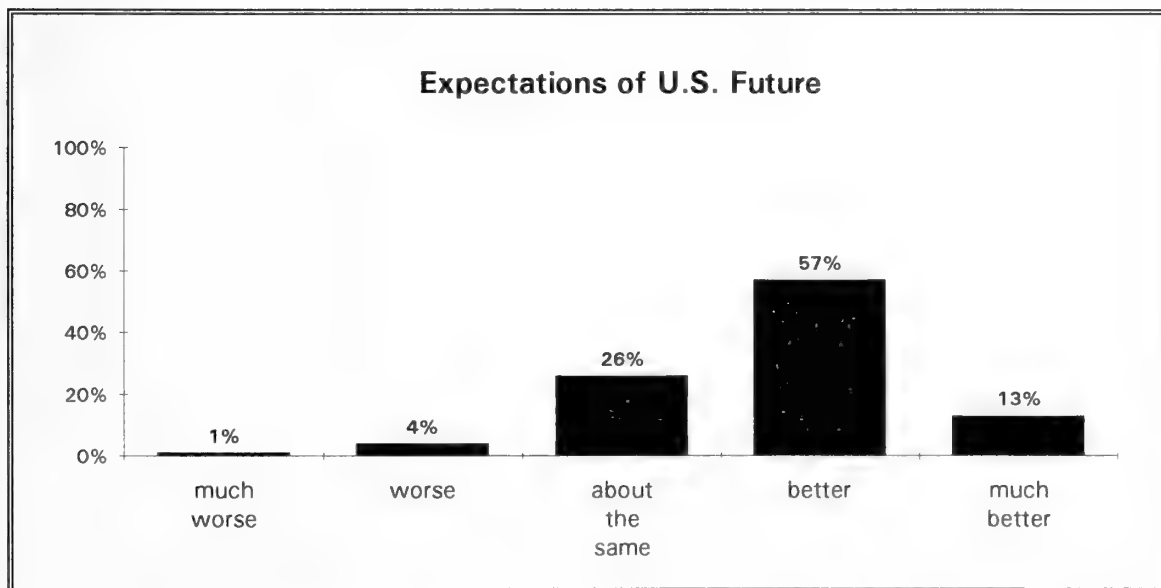


The majority of former Soviet Union refugees consider their life in the U.S. to be O.K. Thirty-one percent believe their life is good or very good.





The majority of former Soviet Union refugees believe their life in the U.S. is about what they expected it would be before arriving.



Seventy percent of former Soviet Union refugees expect their life in the U.S. to get better or much better, about a quarter expect it to remain about the same, and 5% expect it to get worse.







# ETHIOPIAN REFUGEES

Interviewer Manager  
Michael W. Ayele

Interviewers  
Michael W. Ayele, Goitom Bisrat, Enguday  
Geberhiwot, Abdul H. Osman, Mulugeta Sishagn

163 Interviews Conducted

During civil war and famine in Ethiopia many Ethiopians escaped to another country, most often Sudan, because the government was persecuting people voicing political opposition. Some of these refugees have made their way to Texas. The exact number of Ethiopians in Texas is unknown. Using U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement information about resettlement, we estimate that 2,500 to 4,000 Ethiopian refugees live in the state. This number does not include Ethiopian-Americans born in the U.S.



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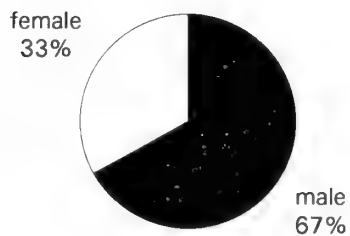
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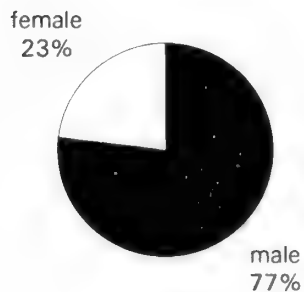
## DEMOGRAPHICS

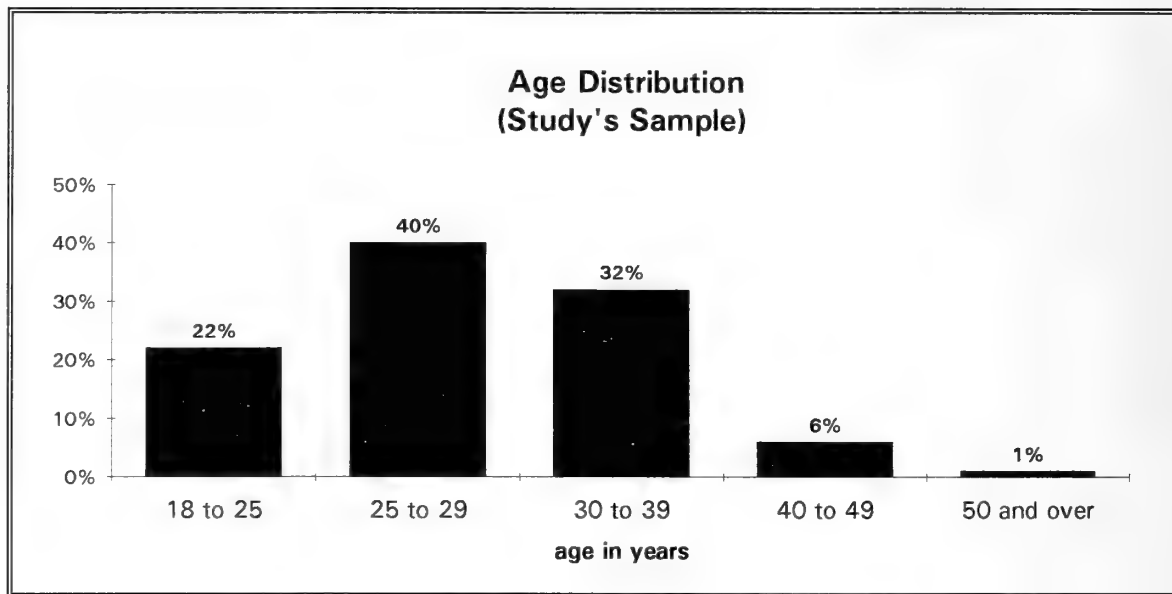
**Distribution of Males and Females  
(U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement)**



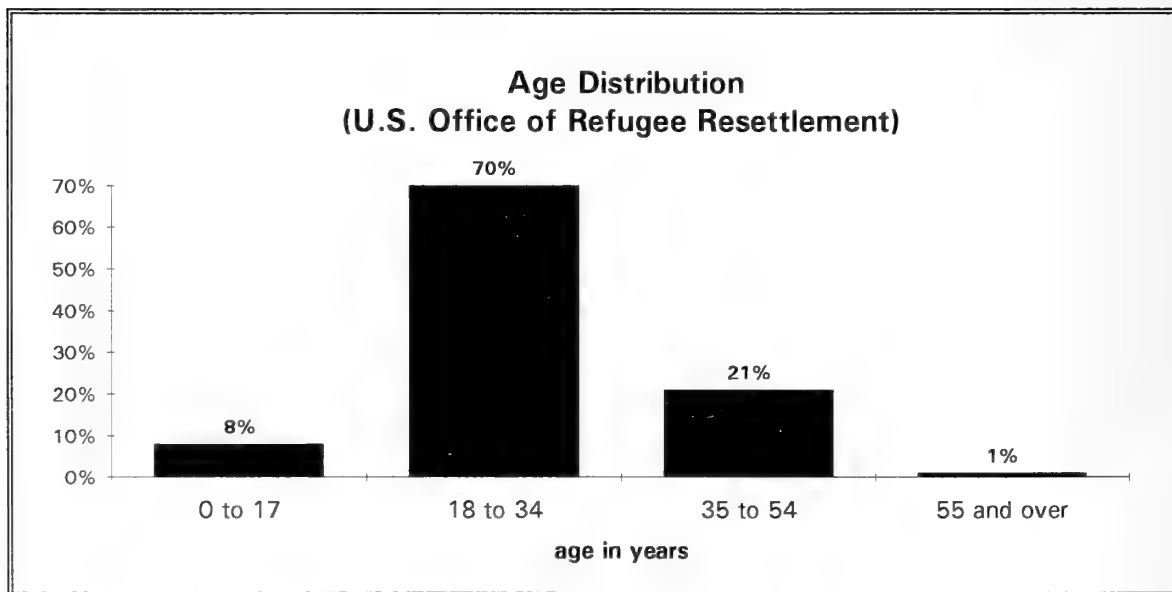
According to the U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement, about two-thirds of all Ethiopian refugees who have resettled in Texas are male. The study's sample reflects this general trend, but consists of 10% more males than are believed to be in Texas' Ethiopian refugee population.

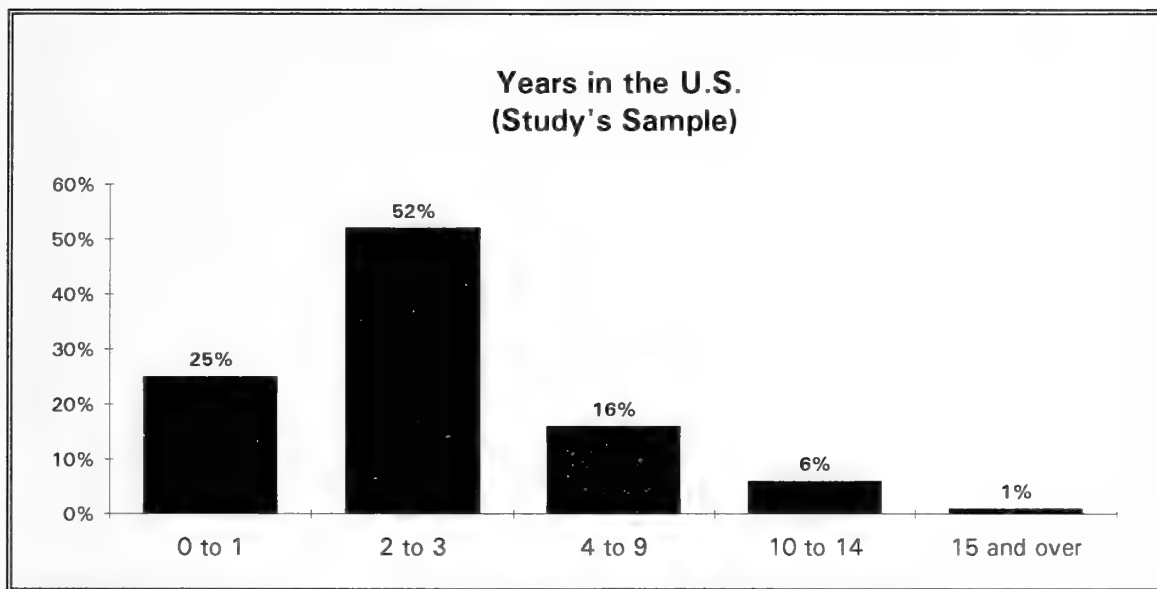
**Distribution of Males and Females  
(Study's Sample)**



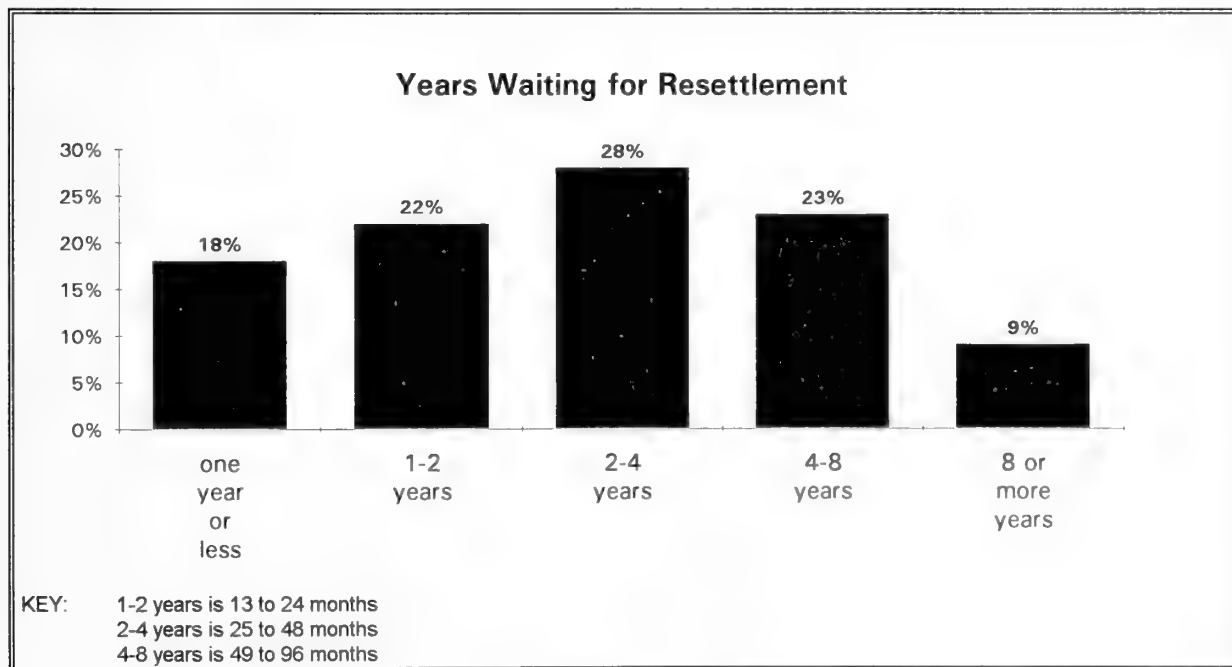


As seen above, the vast majority of Ethiopian refugees in the study (93%) were under the age of 40. The average age of the Ethiopian refugees in the study was 29 years. To participate in the study, a refugee had to be at least 18 years of age. However, as seen below, 8% of Ethiopian refugees in Texas are younger than 18.

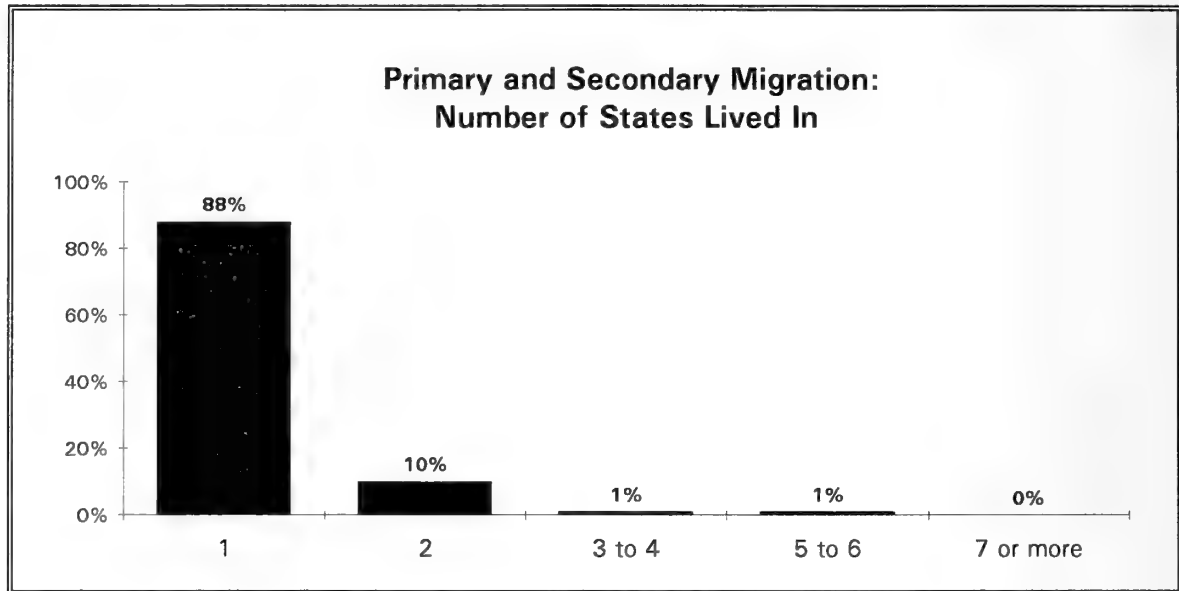




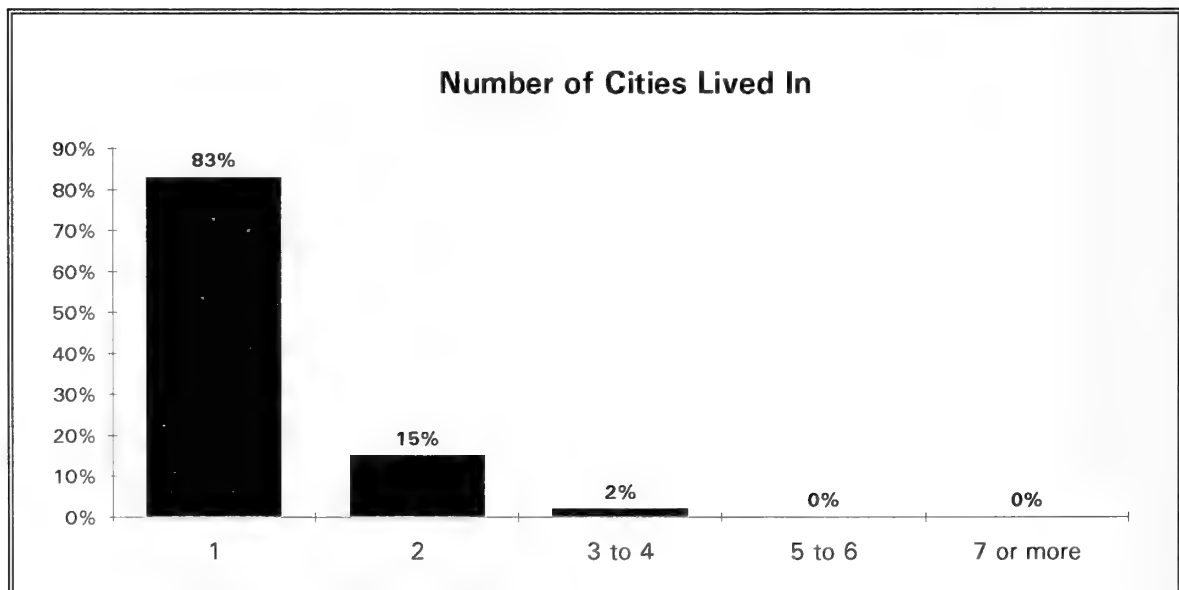
The majority of Ethiopians in the study (77%) have arrived in the U.S. since 1990 (the study was conducted in 1993). Most Ethiopian refugees would have arrived in the U.S. much sooner, as seen below, if they did not have to wait in a country of asylum before resettling here.



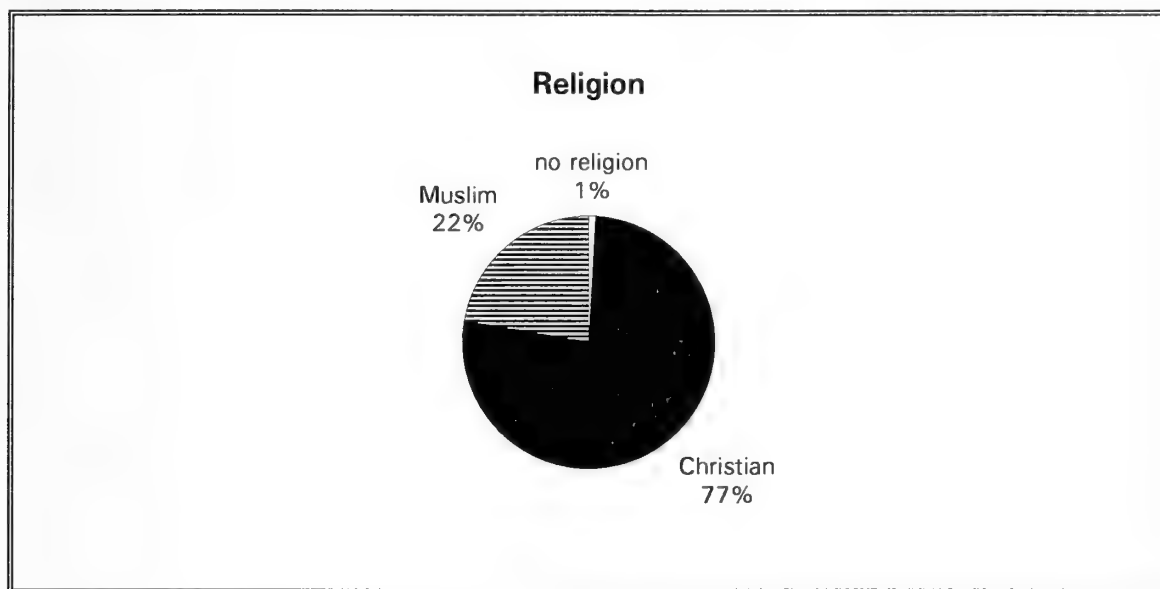
Most Ethiopian refugees had to wait years, usually in Sudan, before resettling in the U.S.



Texas' Ethiopian refugees have typically only lived in Texas. Twelve percent migrated to Texas from another U.S. state.

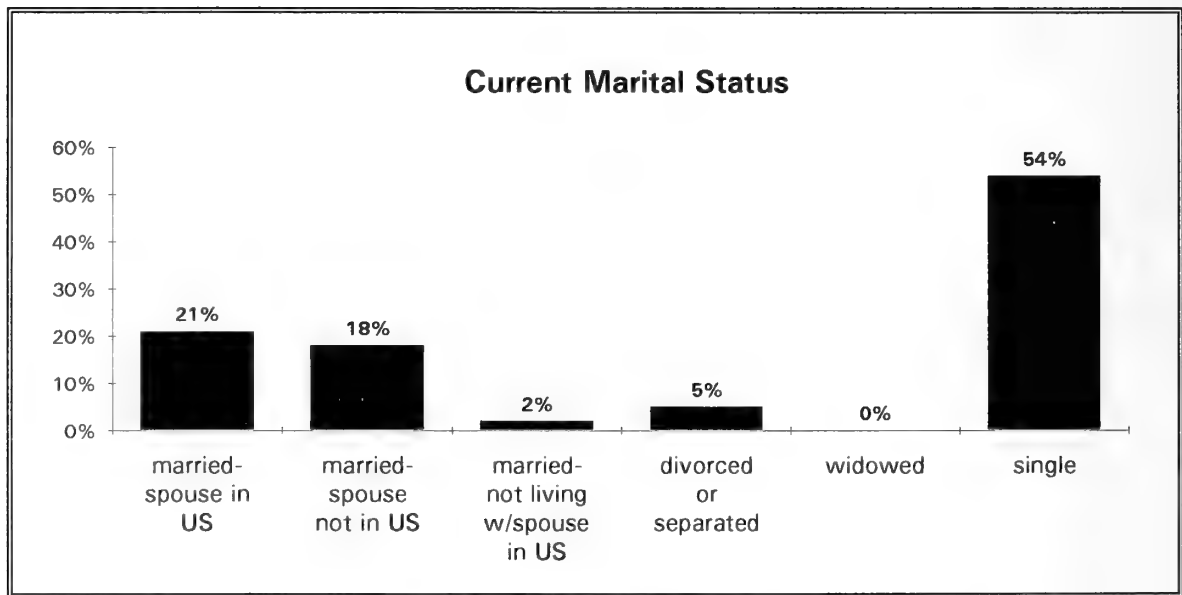


Most Ethiopian refugees in the study (conducted in Houston) have known Houston as their only U.S. home.

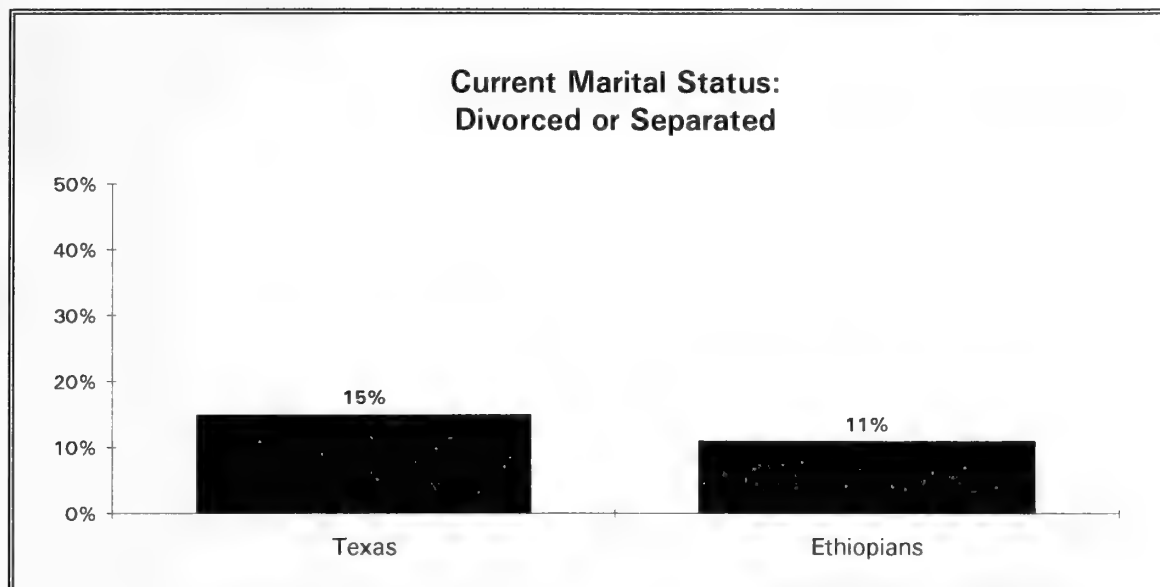


Most Ethiopian refugees consider themselves Christian, but more than one in five indicate they are Muslim. (Only religions named by at least 2% of interviewees were included.)

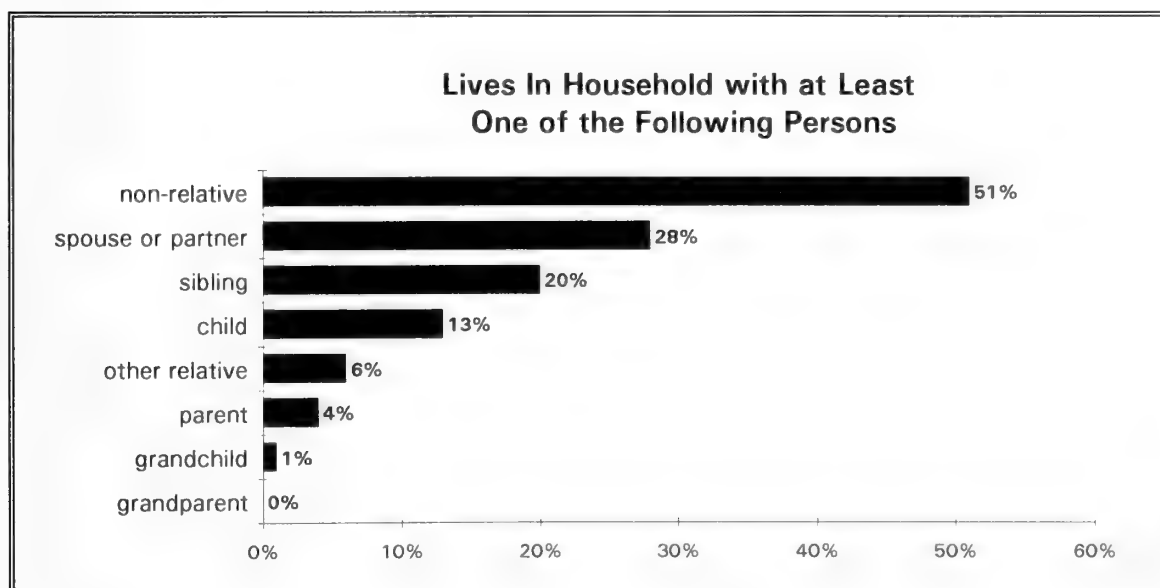
## FAMILY & HOUSEHOLD



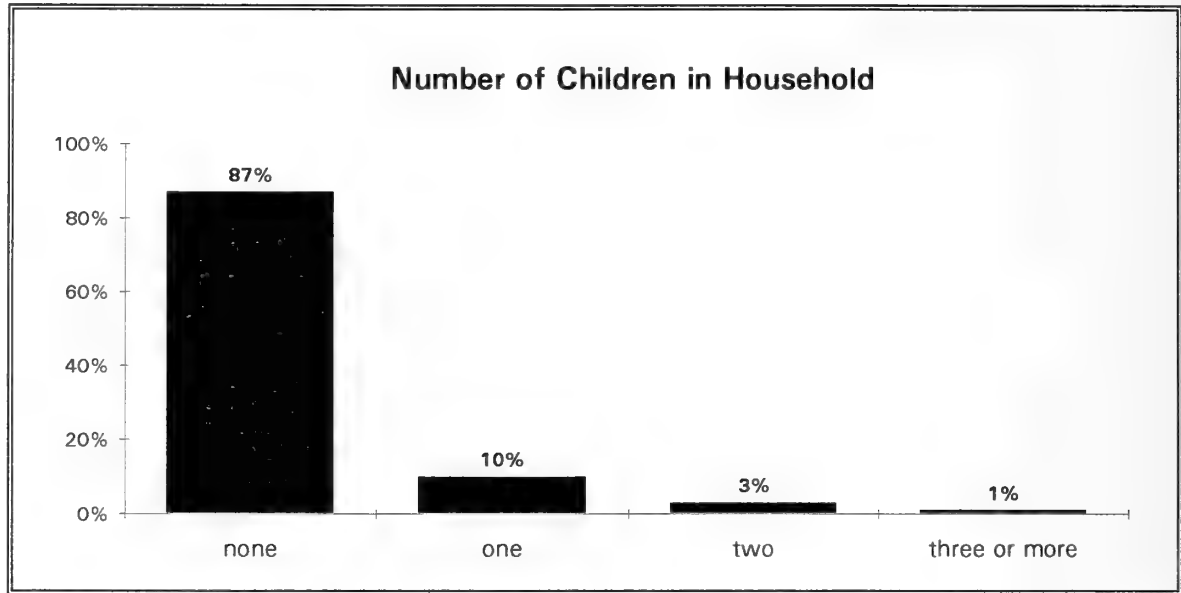
Most Ethiopian refugees are single. While 41% are married, almost half of married Ethiopians have spouses out of the country or living elsewhere in the U.S.



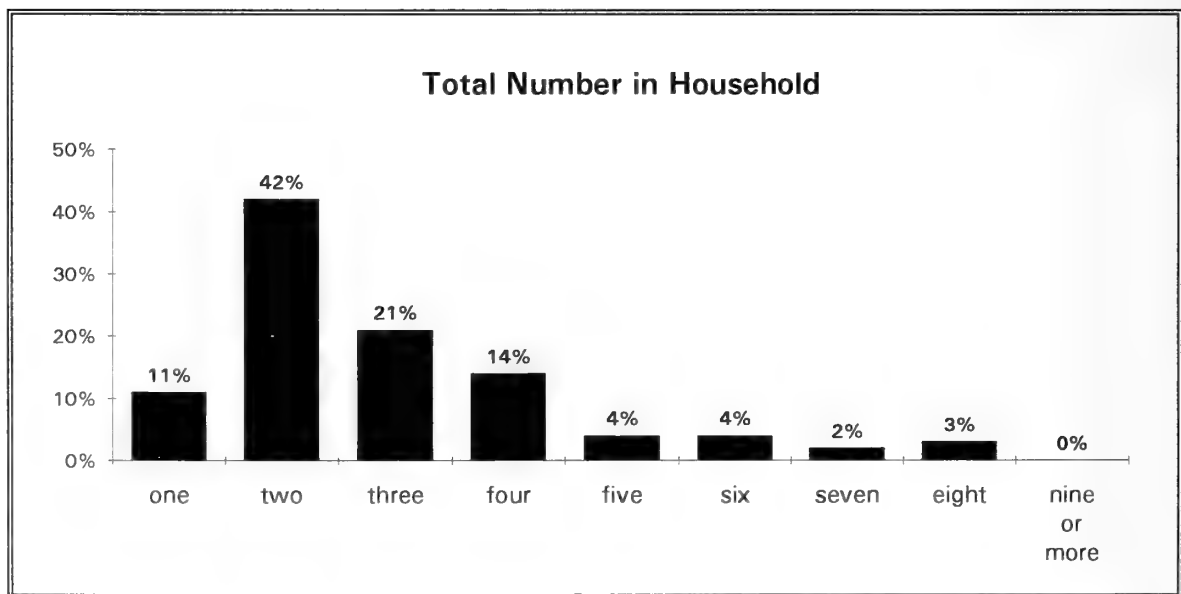
In considering individuals who have been married, Ethiopian refugees are currently divorced or separated at less than the rate of Texas' overall population. Texans (according to 1990 U.S. Census) and Ethiopians (Texas Refugee Study) have divorce / separation rates of 15% and 11%, respectively. The above calculations represent the percentage of individuals whose current marital status is either divorced or separated. Divorced individuals who are currently re-married are not represented in these percentages.



Ethiopian refugees are most likely to be living with a non-relative friend and are only rarely living with a child.



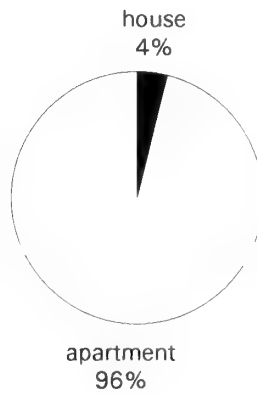
Ethiopian refugees living in Texas typically are not living with children.



Ethiopian refugees usually live in small households of two, three, or four persons.

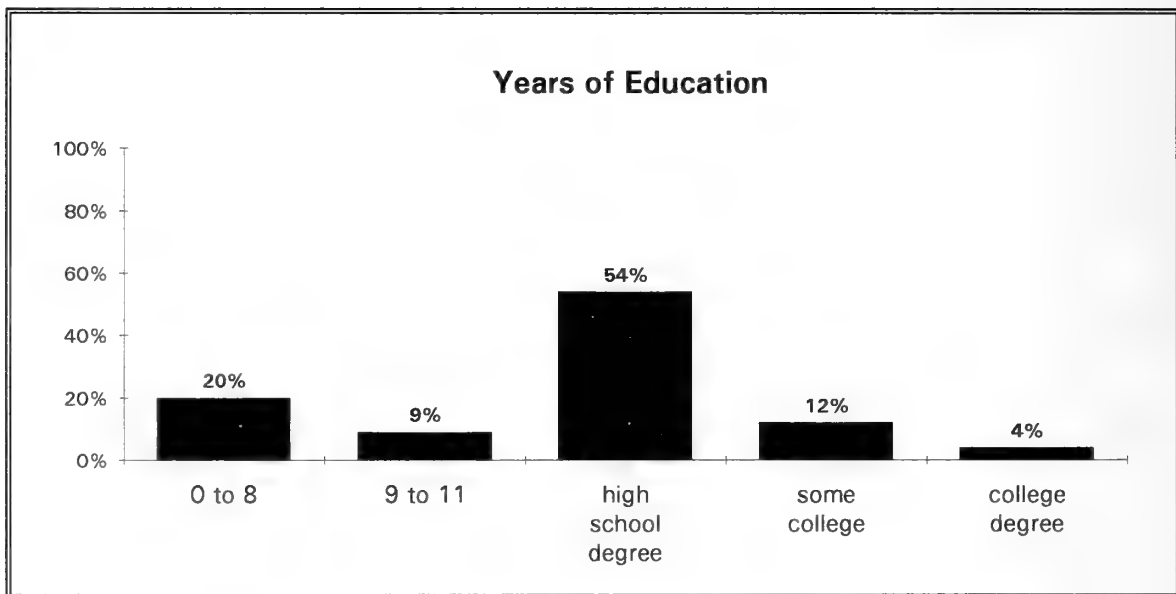


Type of Dwelling

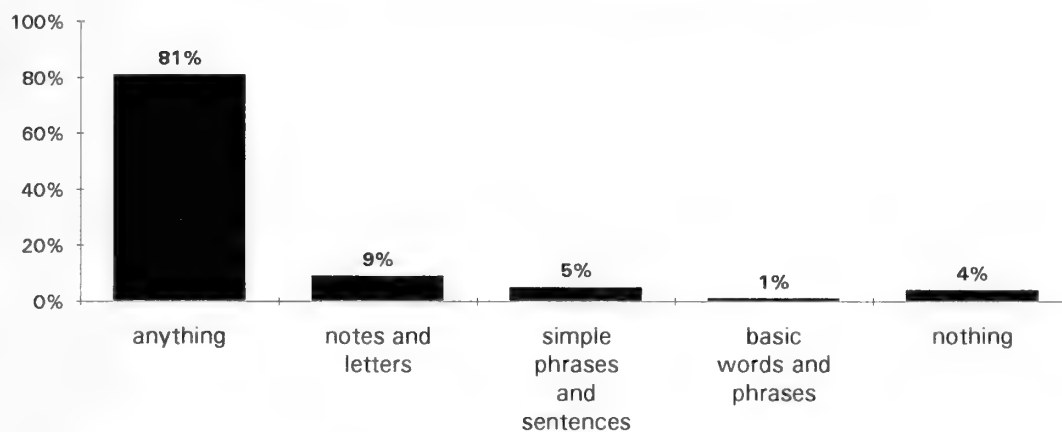


Ethiopian refugees live almost exclusively in apartments.

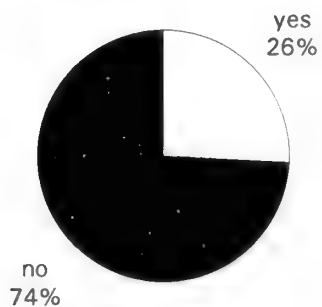
## EDUCATION & ENGLISH



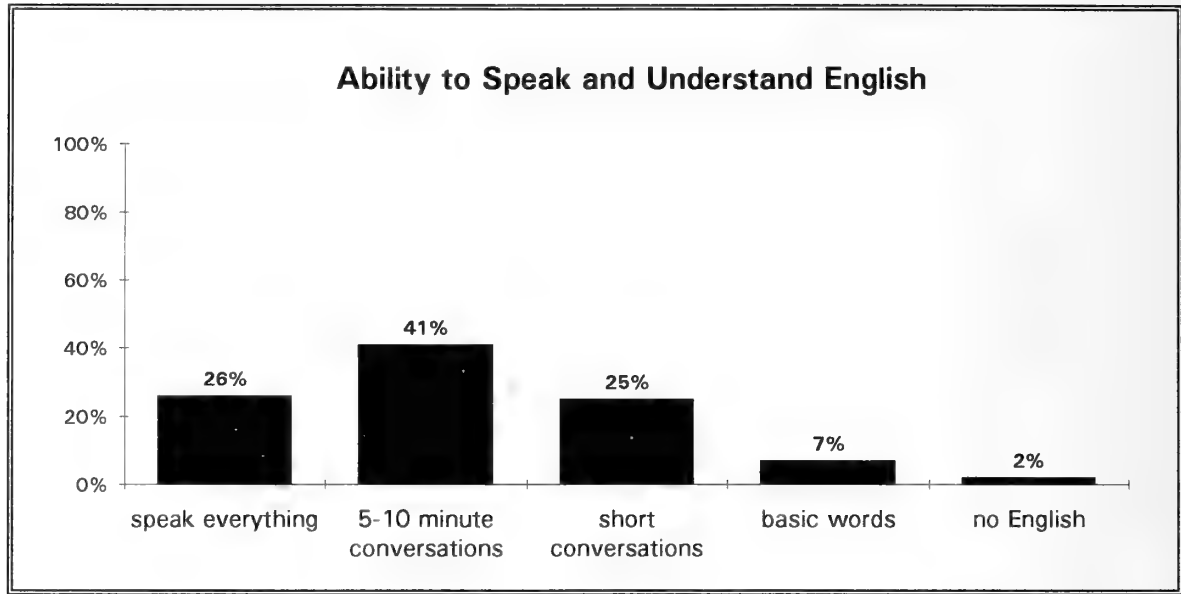
Ethiopian refugees are diverse in their educational backgrounds. Seventy percent have at least a high school degree, and 16% have some college. (Educational level includes schooling before and after U.S. arrival.)

**Ability to Read and Write in Native Language**

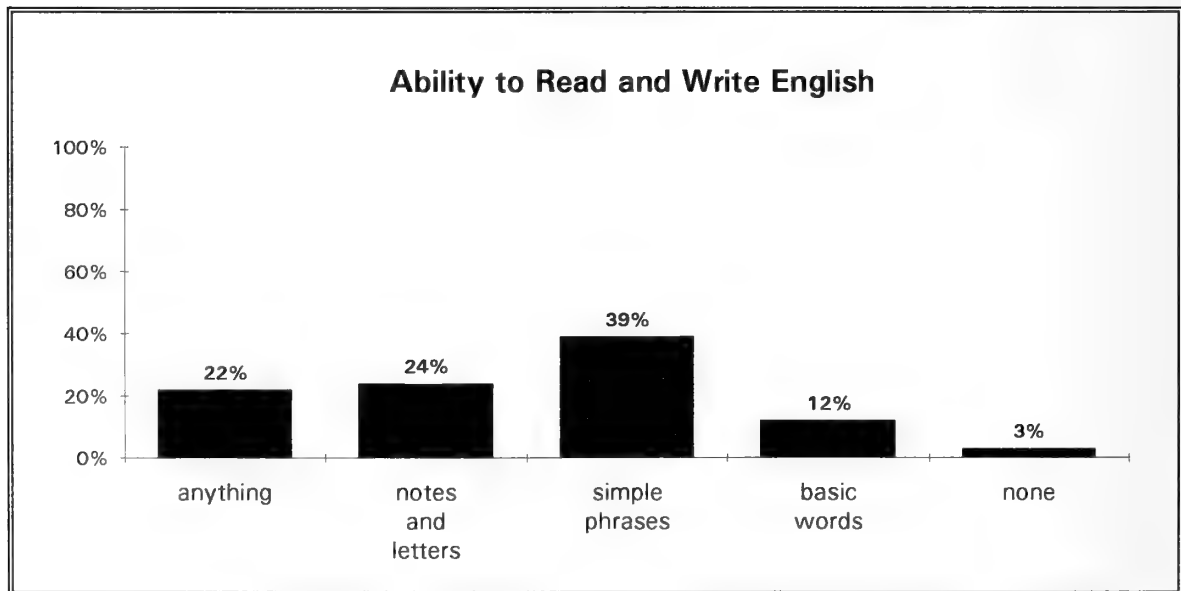
Most Ethiopian refugees are able to read and write in their native language.

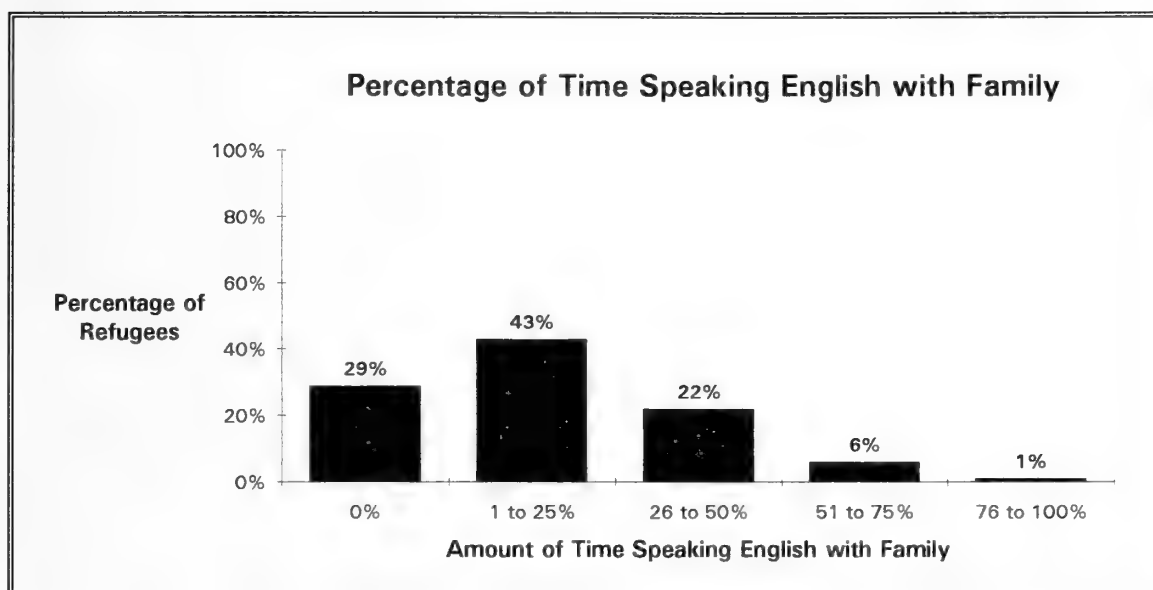
**Has Attended School in the U.S.**

Ethiopian refugees usually received their formal education before coming to the U.S.

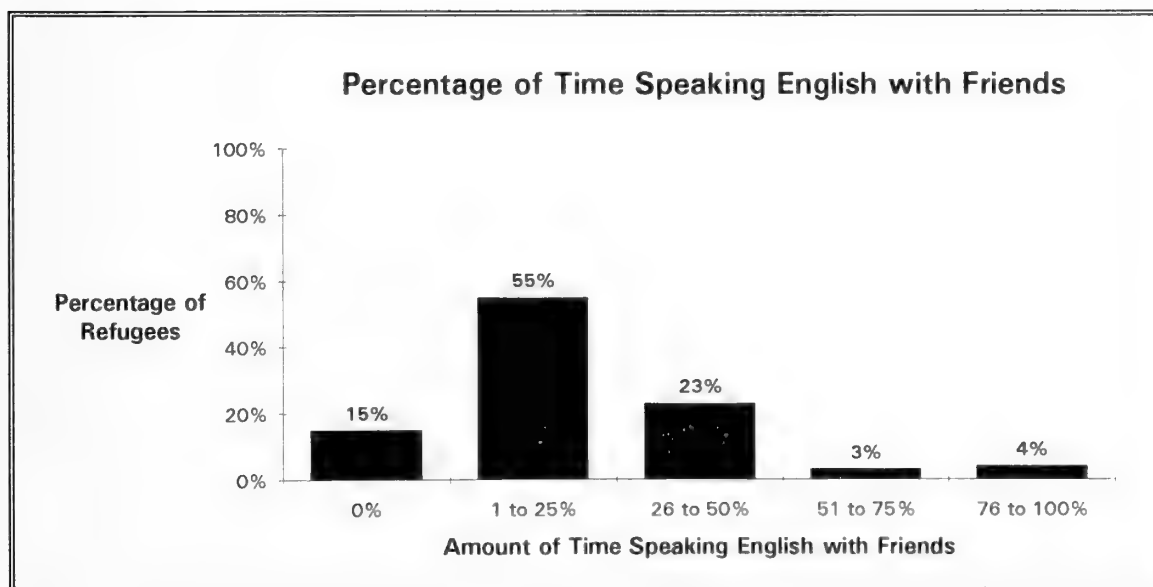


About one-fourth of Ethiopian refugees report being fluent in English, and 91% can speak and understand at least short conversations. The trends are slightly lower for reading and writing English.

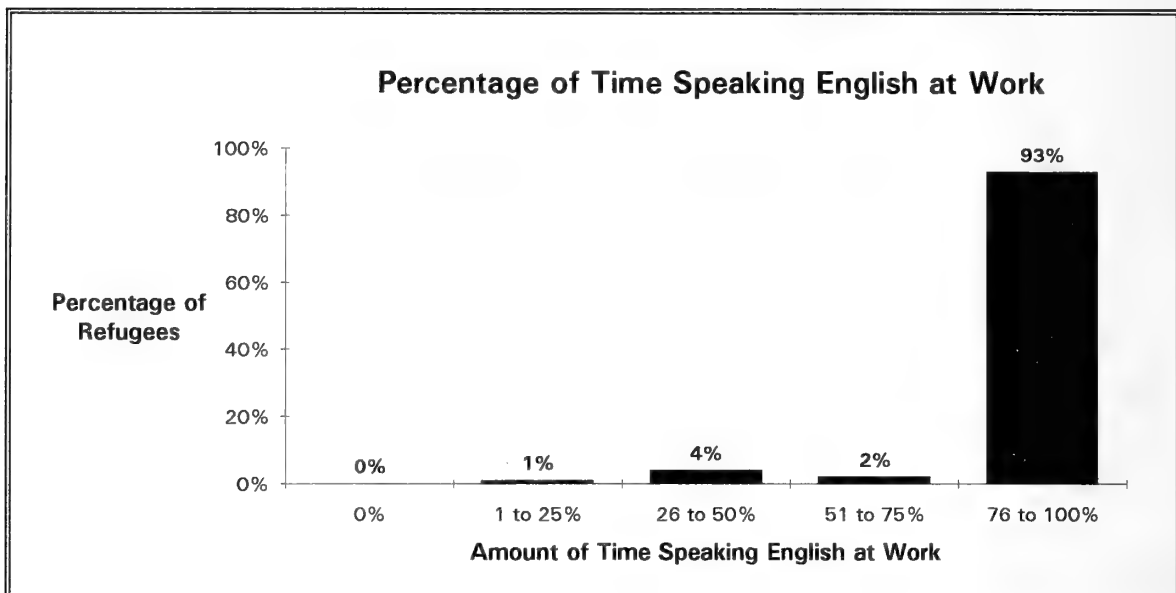




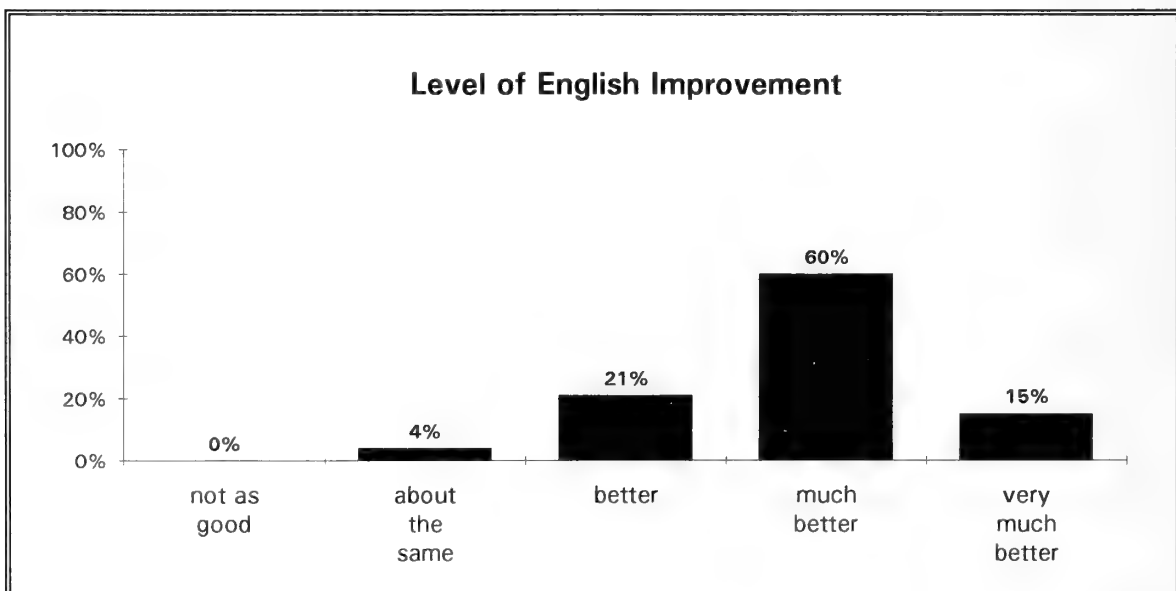
When speaking to family members most Ethiopian refugees speak in their native language. Seven percent report speaking English more than half the time with family members. On average, Ethiopian refugees speak English with family members 20% of the time. (Almost half of Ethiopian refugees live in the U.S. without any family members.)



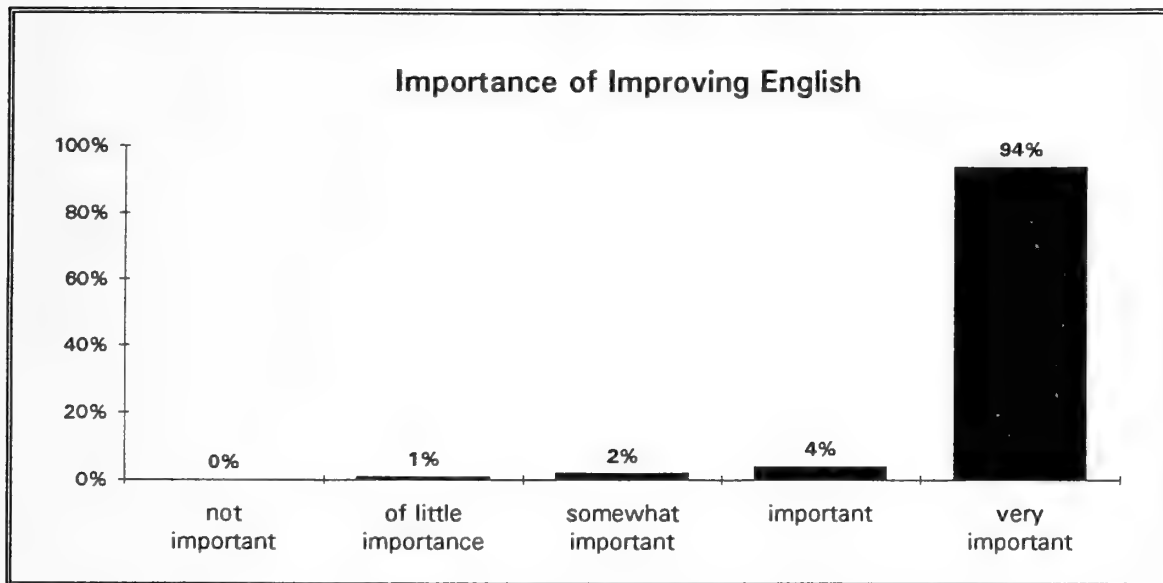
Use of English increases when speaking with friends. Eighty-five percent report speaking with friends in English at least some of the time, but just 7% speak English more than half the time. On average, Ethiopian refugees speak English with friends 23% of the time.



At work, language use changes dramatically for Ethiopian refugees. All Ethiopians reported speaking some English at work, and 93% speak English at least three-fourths of the time while working. On average, Ethiopian refugees speak English 95% of the time while working.



Most Ethiopian refugees report improvement in their English speaking abilities since living in the U.S.



Almost all Ethiopian refugees believe it is important to learn more English.

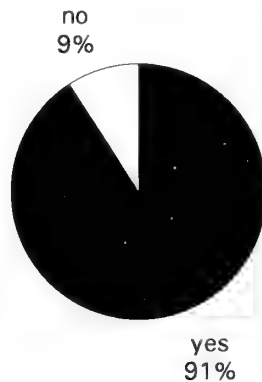
### Common Methods of Learning English

School in Native Country	83%
ESL or Other Formal Class in the U.S.	66%
Talking and Listening to People in the U.S.	60%
School in the U.S.	35%
TV or Radio in the U.S.	29%
Reading Newspapers, Magazines or Books in the U.S.	22%
Everyday Conversation in Native Country	18%
Children in the U.S.	7%

Ethiopians have used and continue to use a wide variety of methods to improve their English skills.

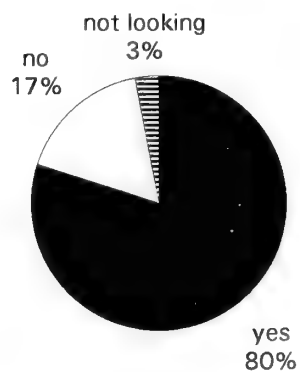
## EMPLOYMENT & INCOME

**Have Worked in the U.S.**



Most Ethiopian refugees have worked in the U.S.

**Currently Working**



Four of five Ethiopian refugees are currently working, and most unemployed Ethiopians are looking for work.



## Ethiopian Occupational Areas

OCCUPATION	PERCENT	AVERAGE HOURLY WAGE
manufacturing	30%	\$ 6.01
labor	16%	\$ 5.01
food preparation/service	12%	\$ 8.13
personal service	10%	\$ 4.92
construction trades	6%	\$ 7.20
protective services	6%	\$ 4.67
sales	6%	\$ 4.94
technician	5%	\$ 6.79
freight/stock/materials	4%	\$ 7.63
education	2%	*
farming/fishing	1%	*
health/social care	1%	*
professional/administrative	1%	*
self employed/business owner	1%	*

\* Not enough interviews to calculate wage.

The occupational areas for Ethiopian refugees are diverse. The most common type of work is manufacturing, with three in ten workers employed in this area. Labor, food preparation and services, and personal services are also common. (Note that these occupations may only be applicable to the Houston area, and wages are averages for a relatively small number of interviewees. Wages are affected by, among other things, length of employment and skill level.)

## Ethiopian Interviewees' Occupations

### General Manufacturing

assembly	17.3 %
machinist / machine operator	11.0 %
general manufacturing	.8 %
production analyst	.8 %

### Labor

housekeeper / maid	7.9 %
custodial / cleaning	6.3 %
maintenance / repair	2.4 %

### Food Preparation / Processing / Distribution

dishwasher	4.7 %
waiter / waitress	3.1 %
cook / baker	2.4 %
food prep / assistant	.8 %
fast food restaurant	.8 %

### Personal Service Occupation

child care	3.9 %
hotel / doorman	3.1 %
laundry / dry cleaner	2.4 %
travel	.8 %

### Construction Trade

welder	3.9 %
painter / wall paper	1.6 %
assistant (general)	.8 %

### Protective Service

parking attendant	3.9 %
security guard	1.6 %

### Salesperson / Sales Clerk

cashier / checker / sales clerk	5.5 %
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### Technologist / Technician

general technician	3.1 %
science lab / technician	1.6 %

### Freight Stock and Material Mover

warehouse/ shipping/ receiving/ supply	3.1 %
delivery	.8 %

Education

ESL instructor	.8 %
teacher	.8 %

Business Owner / Self-Employed

general	.8 %
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Farming / Fishing / Forestry

fisherman / shrimper	.8 %
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Health Care / Social Service Practitioner

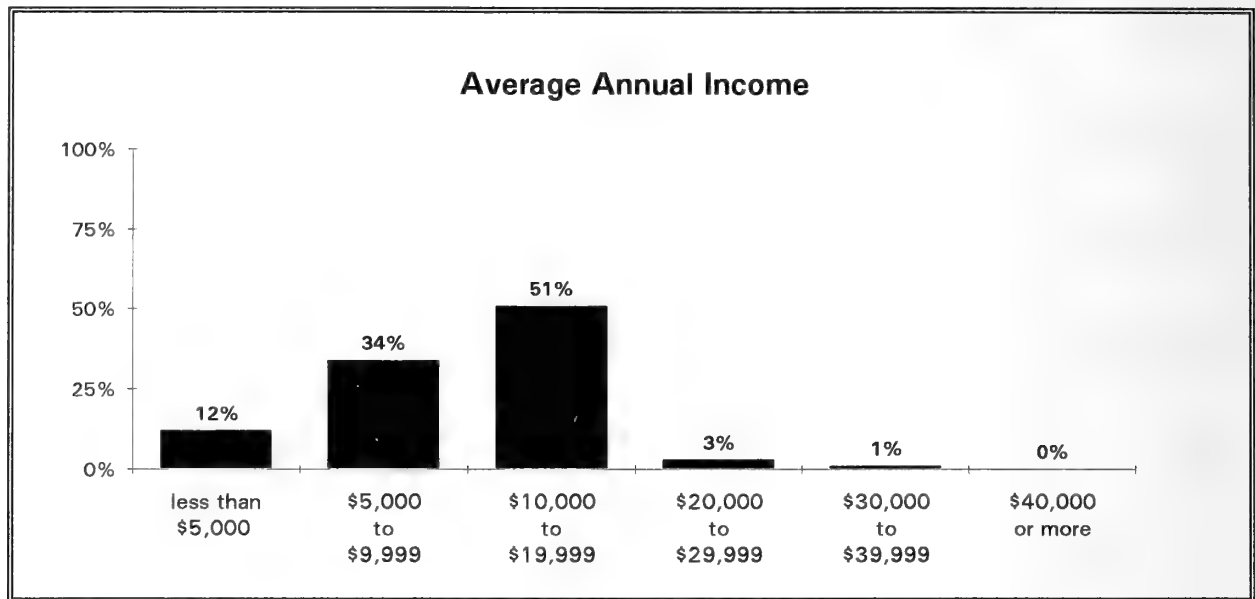
social / case worker	.8 %
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Manager / Administrator / Professional

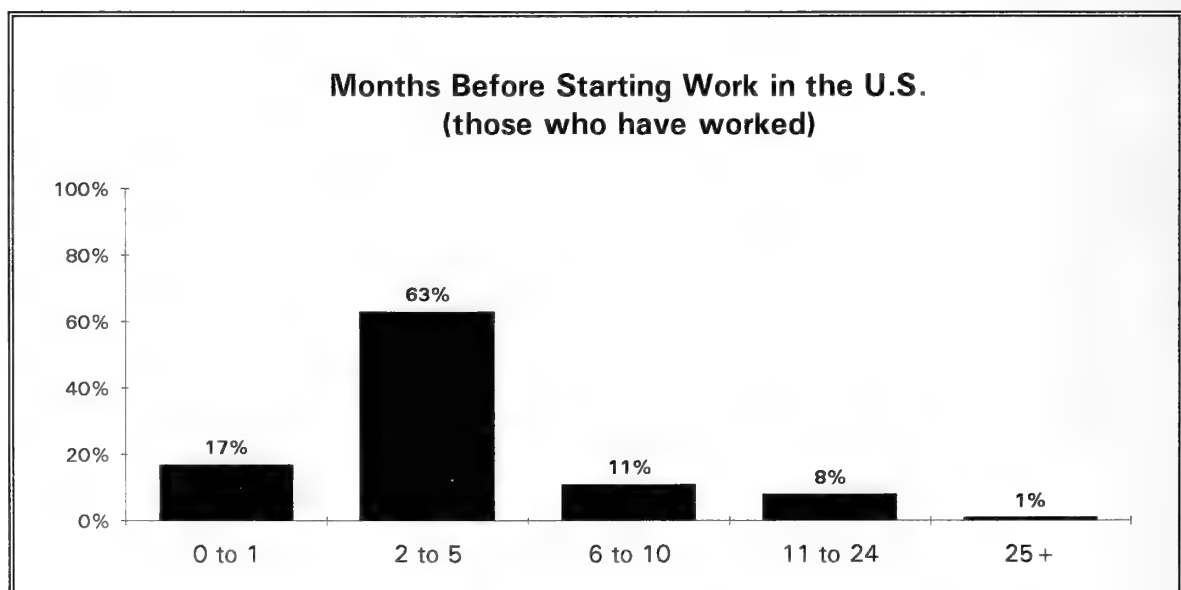
manager / supervisor	.8 %
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Miscellaneous

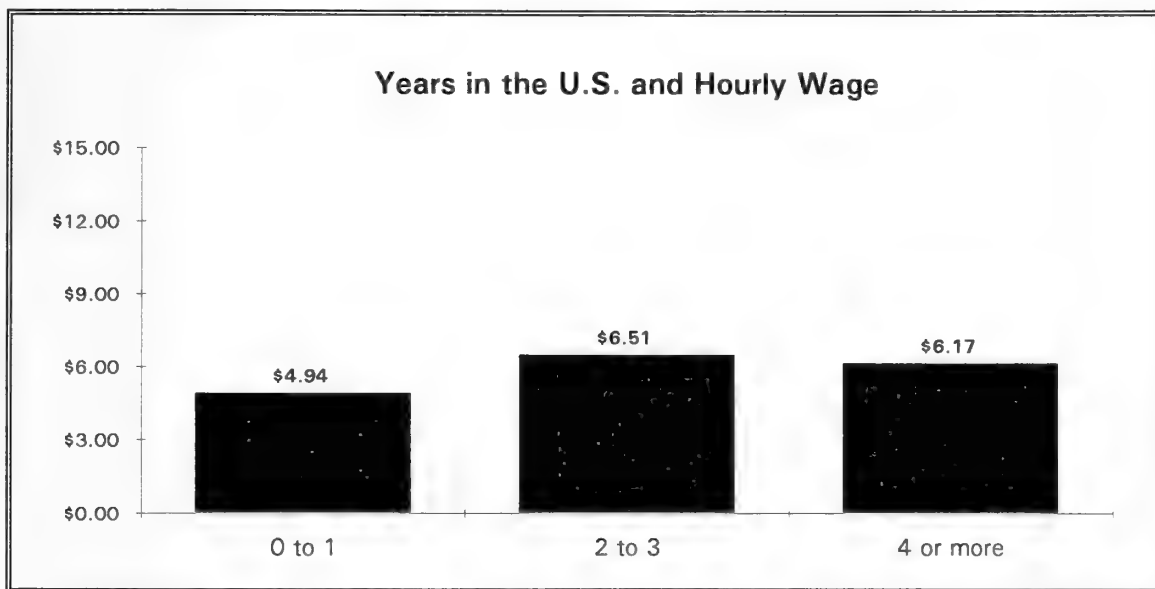
general help	.8 %
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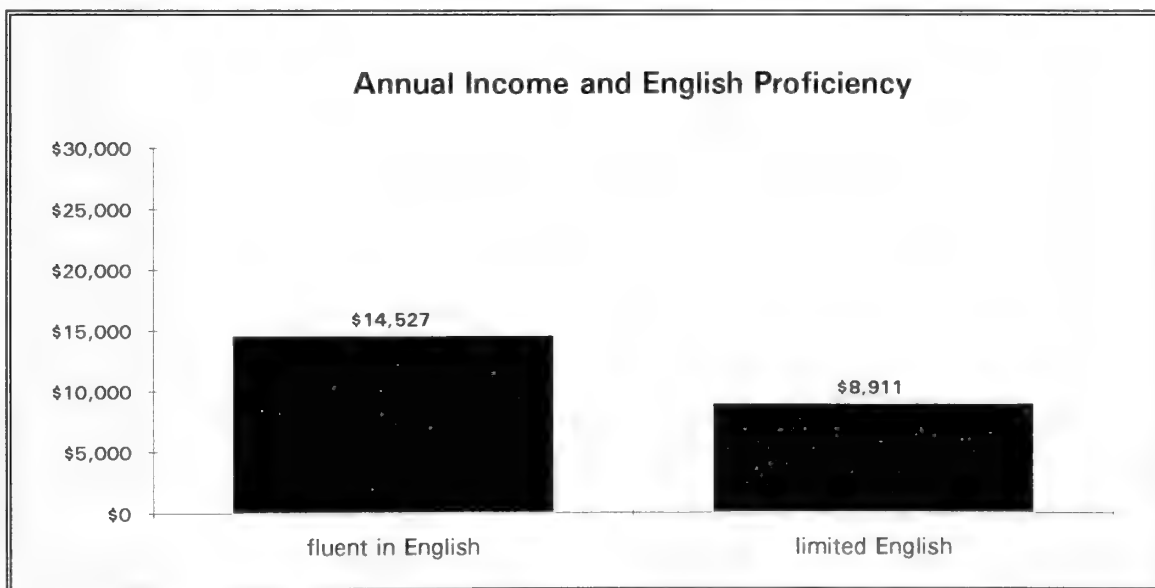
The average annual income of a working former Ethiopian refugee was \$10,732 in 1992. Half of working former Ethiopian refugees earned more than \$10,100, and half earned less. (Incomes were calculated for former Ethiopian refugees arriving in the U.S. before 1992 and earning some income in 1992.)



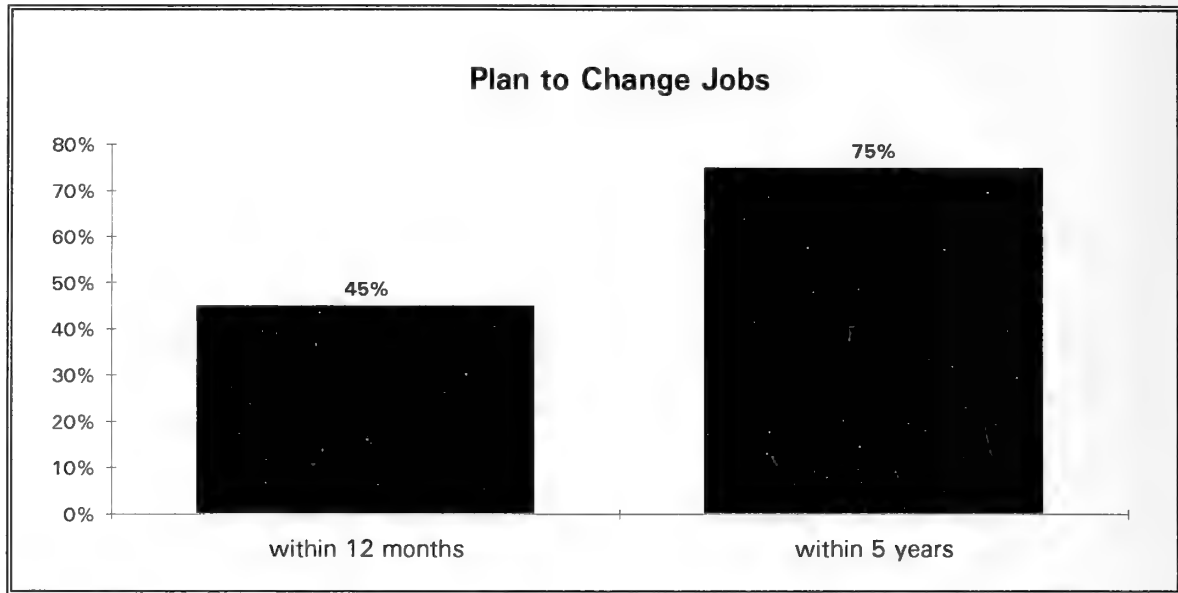
Eighty percent of Ethiopian refugees (of those who have worked in the U.S.) started their first job within five months of living in the U.S.



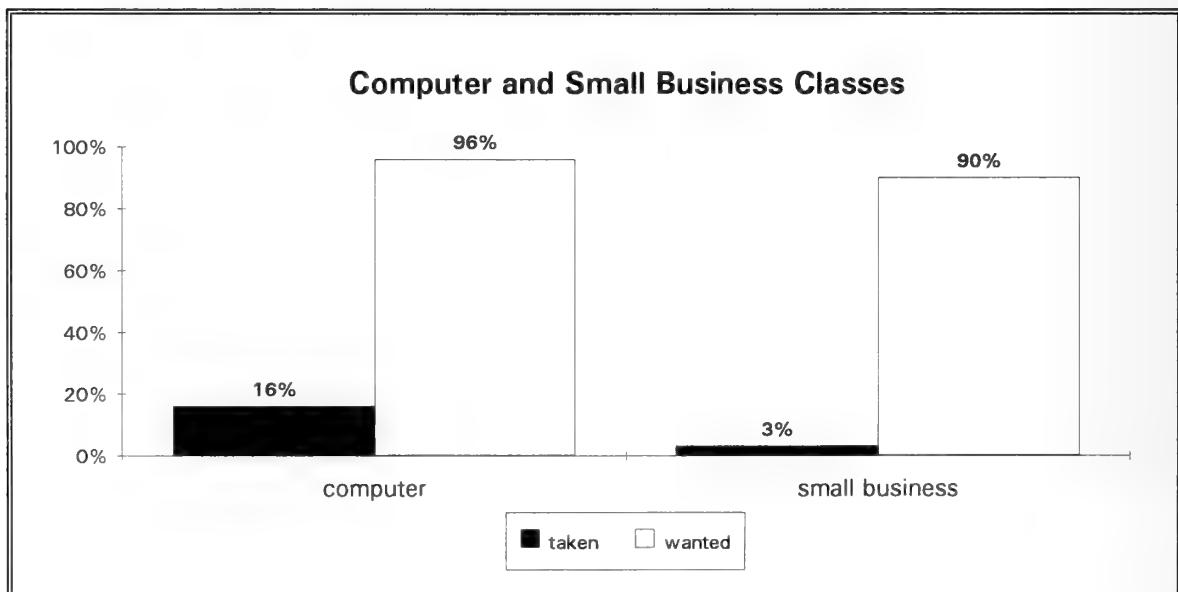
Average wages for Ethiopian refugees rose the first two years in the U.S., but have not continued to rise after that.



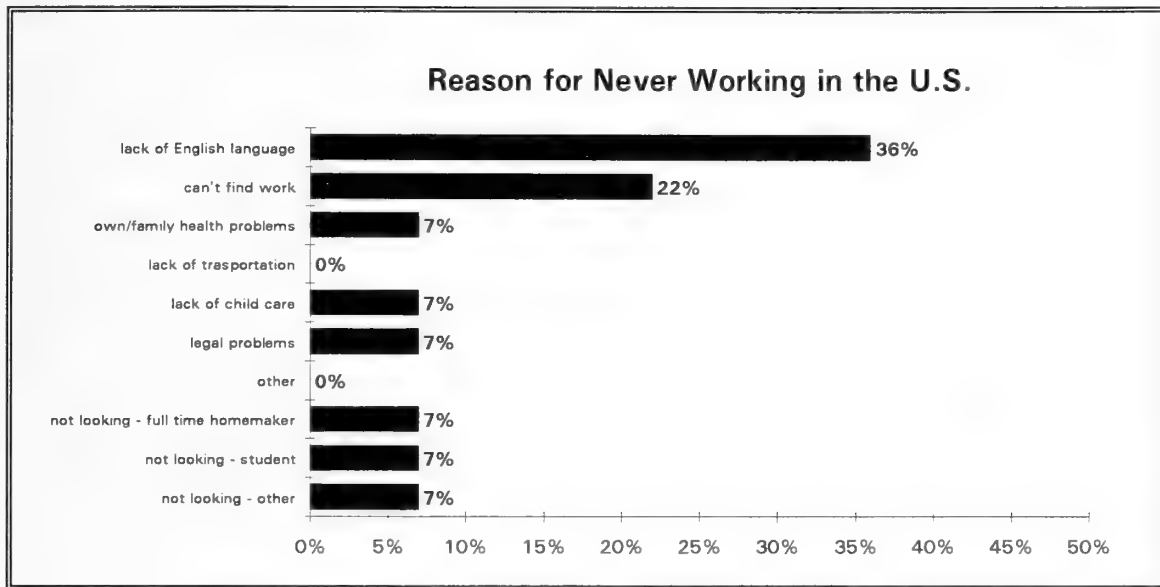
Average annual income increases with English skills. (Incomes were calculated for Ethiopian refugees arriving in the U.S. before 1992 and earning some income in 1992.)



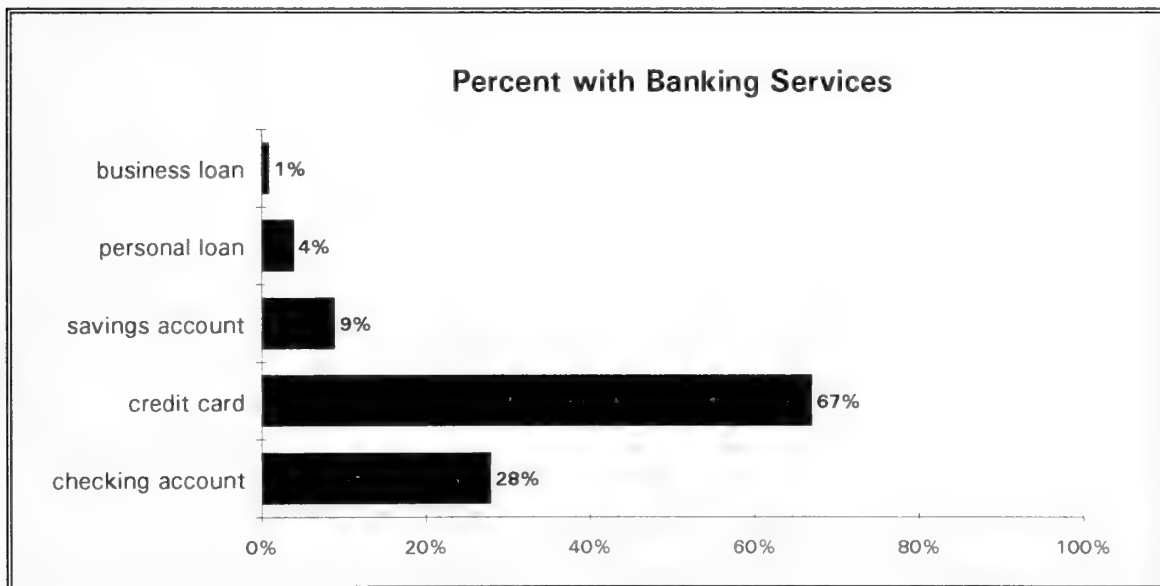
Almost half of Ethiopian refugees plan to change jobs in the next 12 months. Three of four anticipate a change in jobs over the next five years.



Sixteen percent of Ethiopians have taken a computer class, and almost all would like to take a computer class. Three percent have taken a class on small business, and 90% would like to take one.

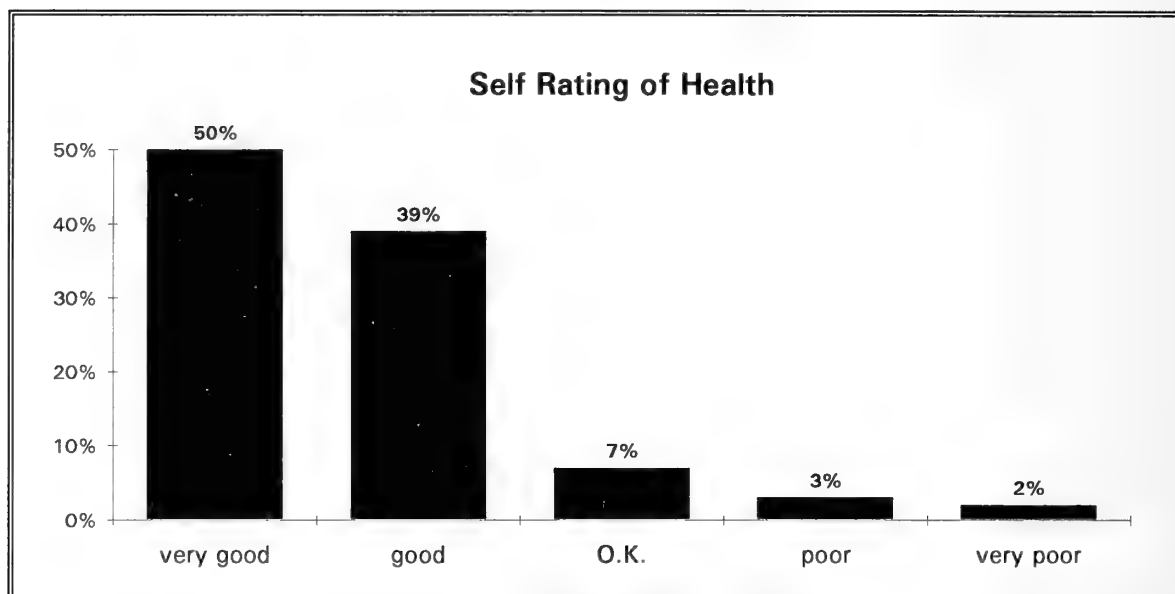


Ethiopian refugees who have not worked in the U.S. cite lack of English and the inability to find work as the primary reasons for not working.

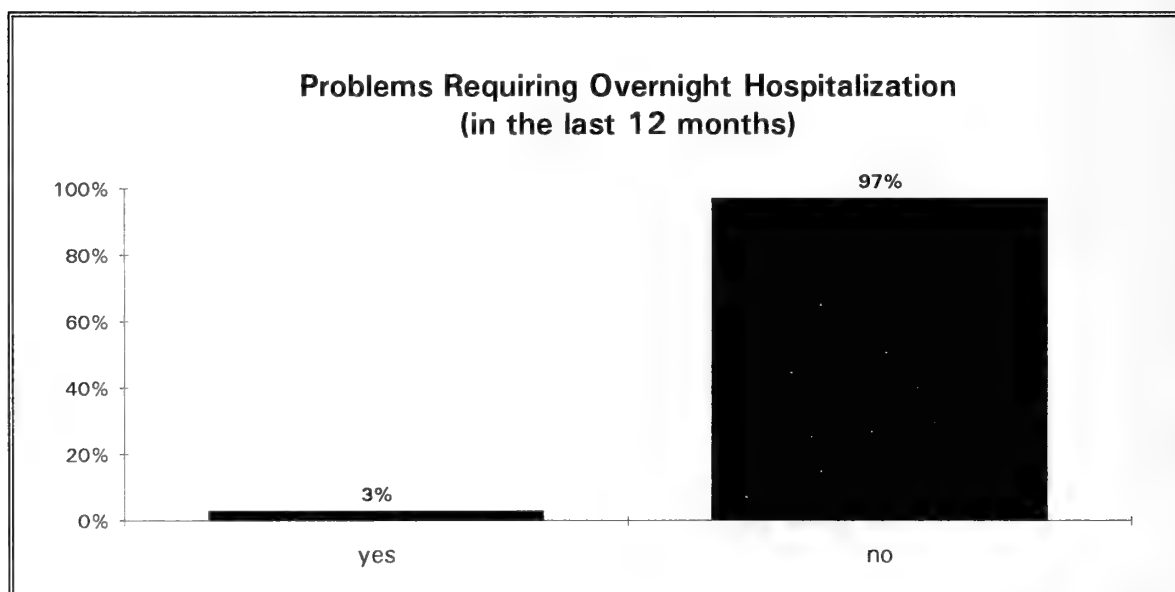


Two of three Ethiopian refugees report having a credit card, 28% have a checking account, and 9% have a savings account.

## HEALTH

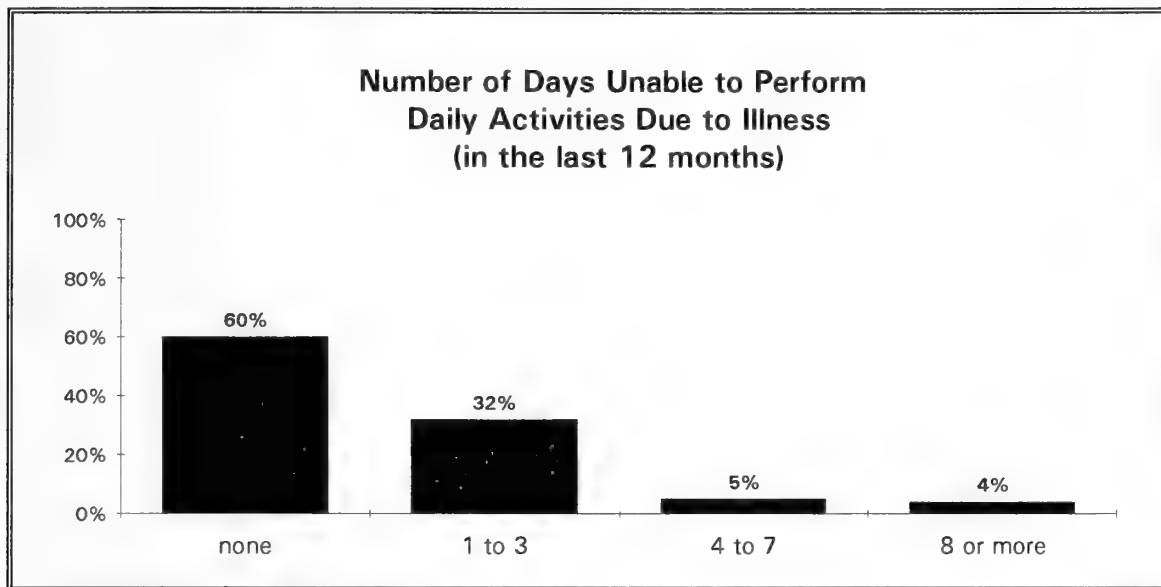


The majority of Ethiopian refugees consider their health to be good or very good, but 5% rate their health as poor or very poor.

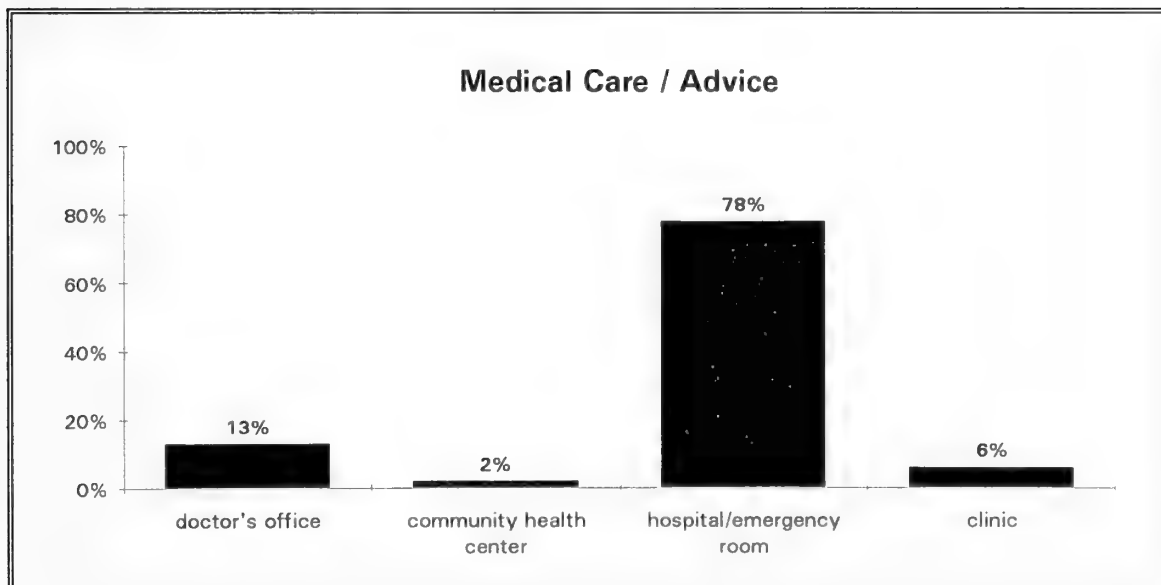


Three percent of Ethiopian refugees spent at least one night in the hospital during the previous 12 months (includes childbirth).

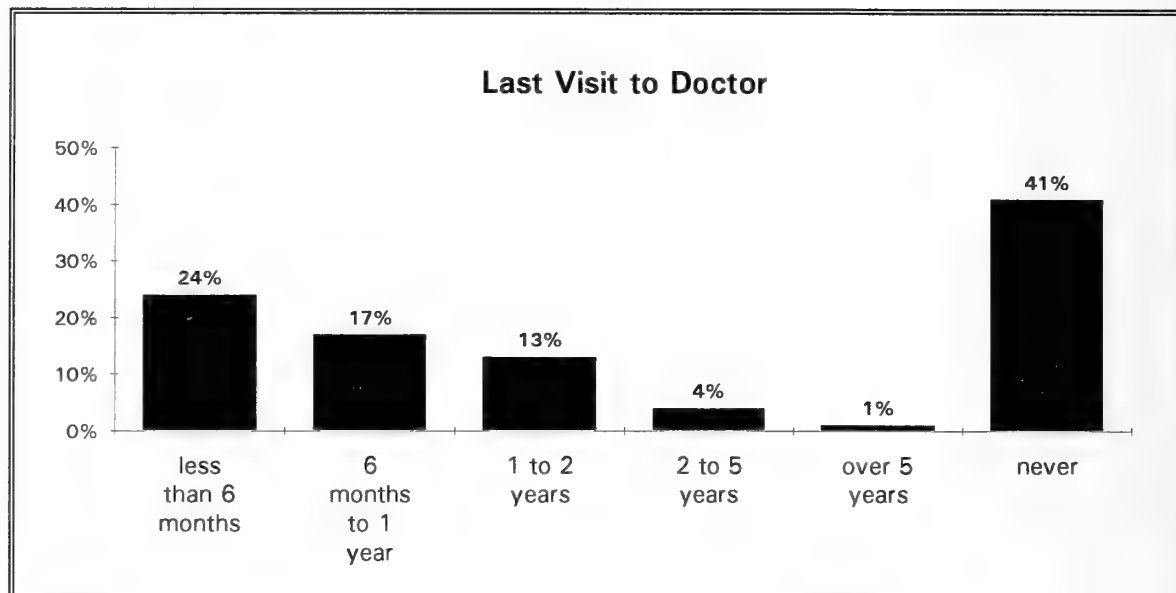




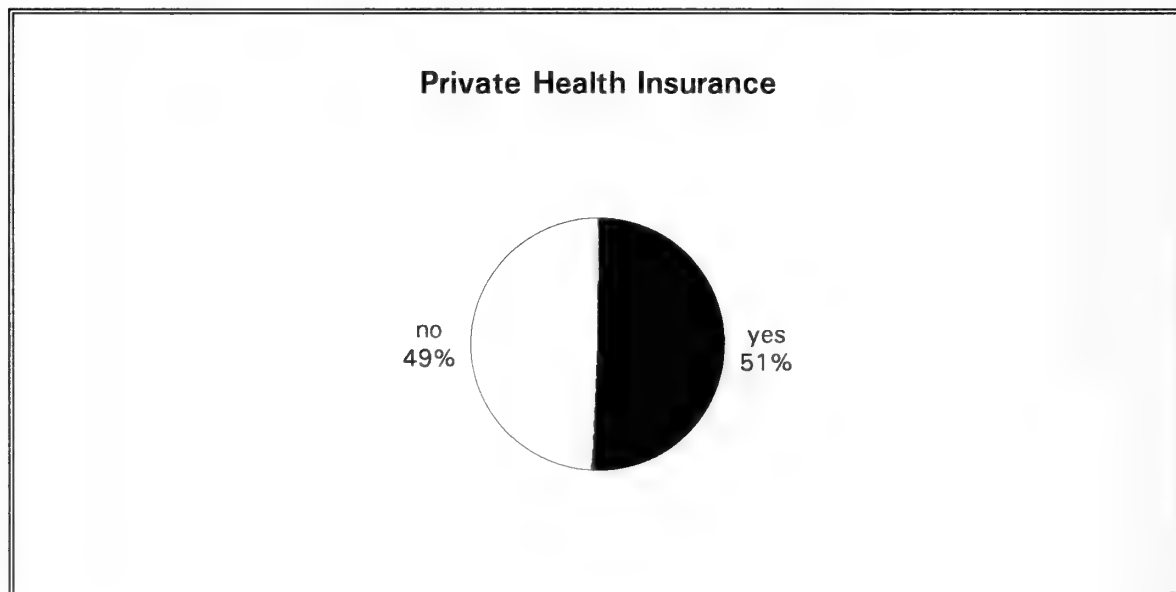
Over half of former Ethiopian refugees reported not missing daily activities such as work due to illness during the past year. Four percent of Ethiopian refugees reported missing eight or more days due to illness.



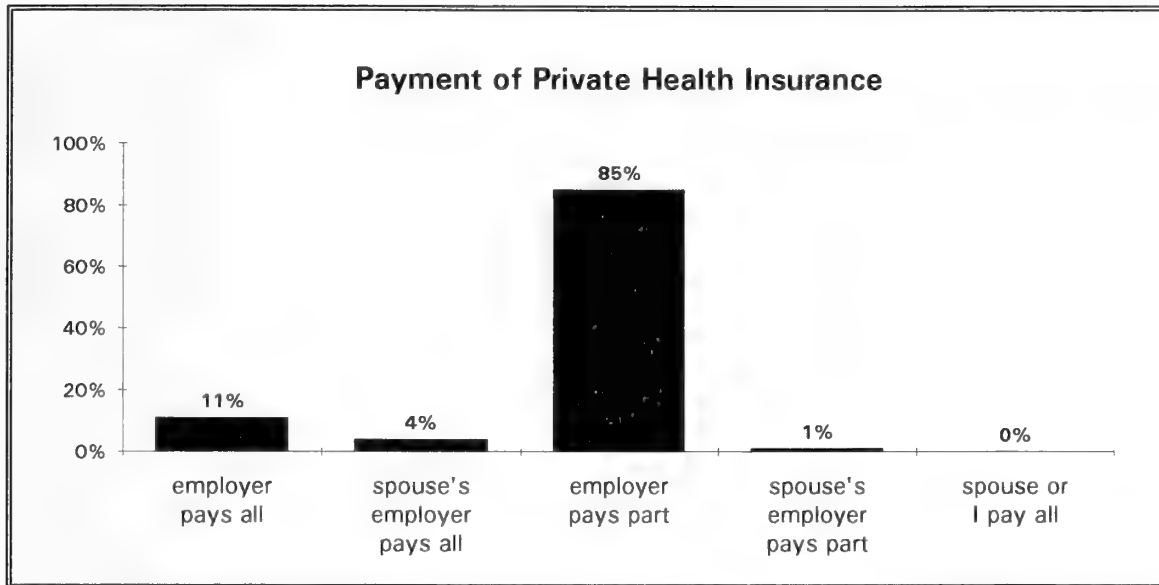
When in need of medical care or advice, most Ethiopian refugees go to a hospital or emergency room.



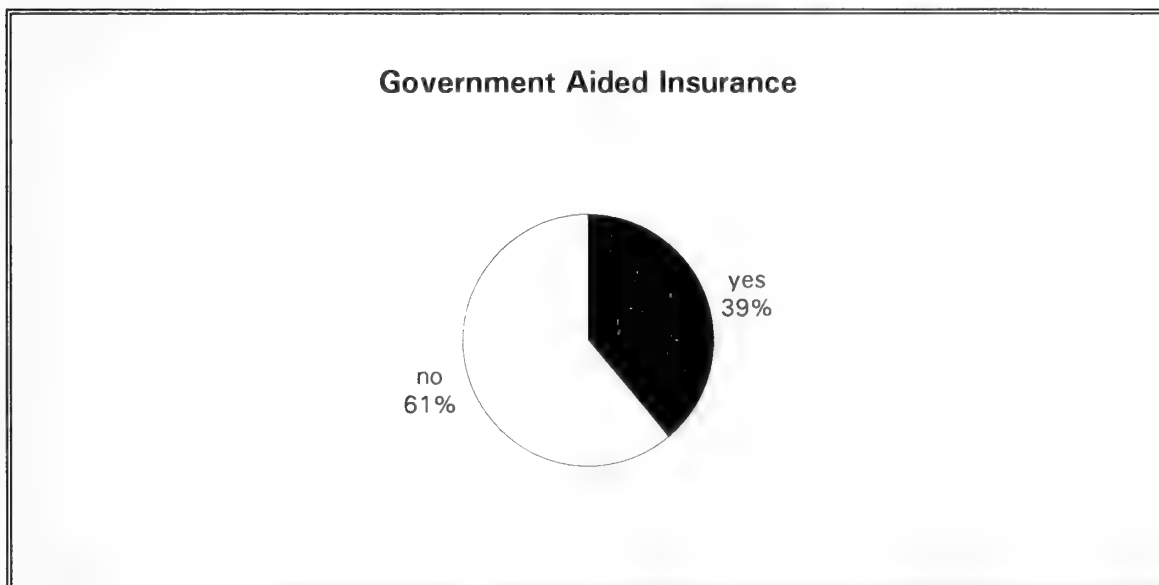
Forty-one percent of Ethiopian refugees had been to see a doctor in the previous 12 months. The same percentage had never been to see a doctor in the U.S.



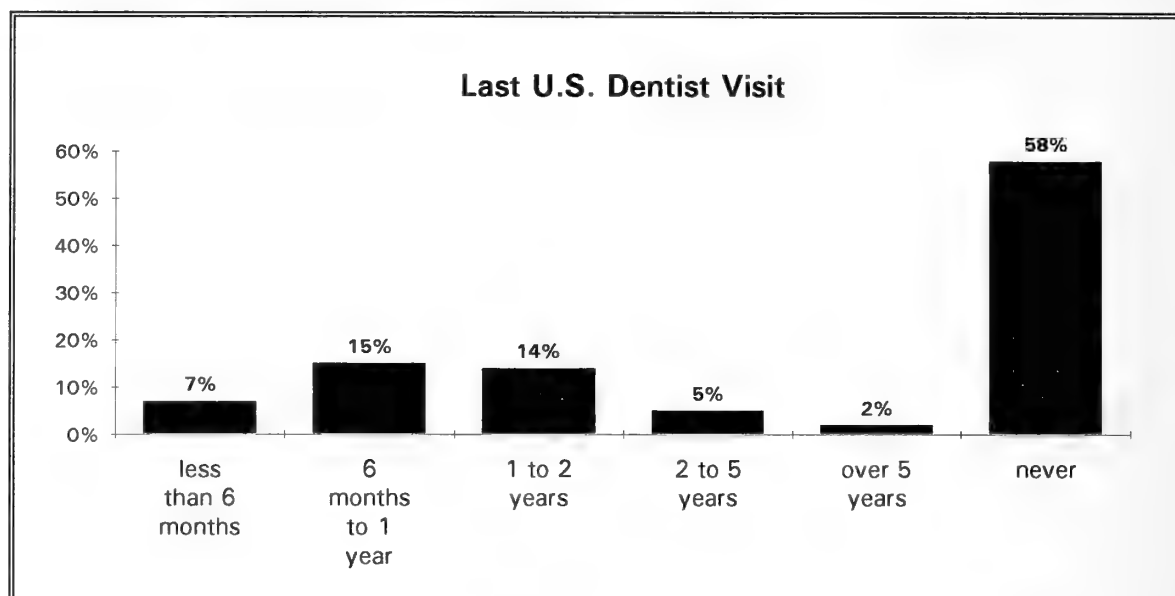
Half of Ethiopian refugees reported having private health insurance.



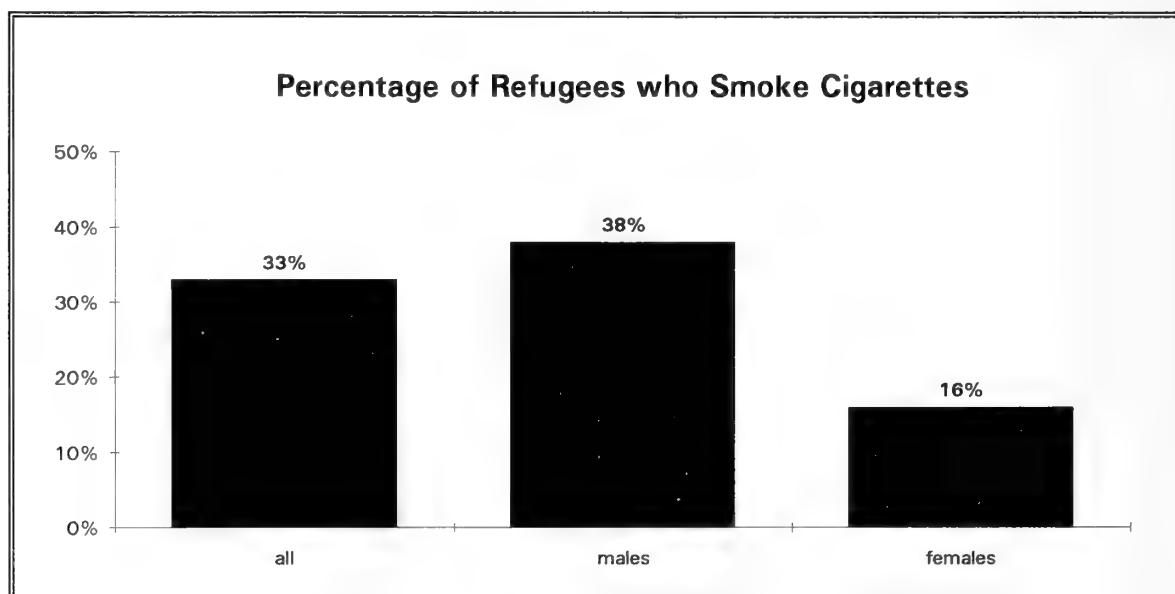
Of those with private insurance, most Ethiopian refugees have employers who pay for part of their insurance.



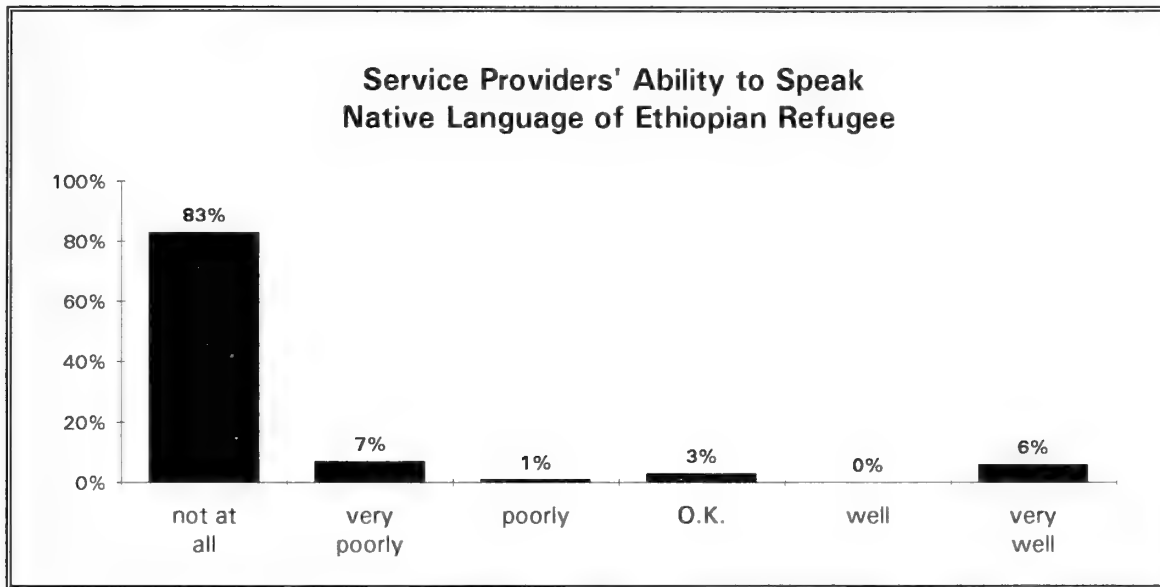
Of the 49% of Ethiopians that do not have private health insurance, 39% have government assisted health insurance such as Medicare, Medicaid, or County Indigent Health Care. However, 30% of all Ethiopian refugees have no health insurance.



Fifty-eight percent of Ethiopians have never been to see a dentist in the U.S.

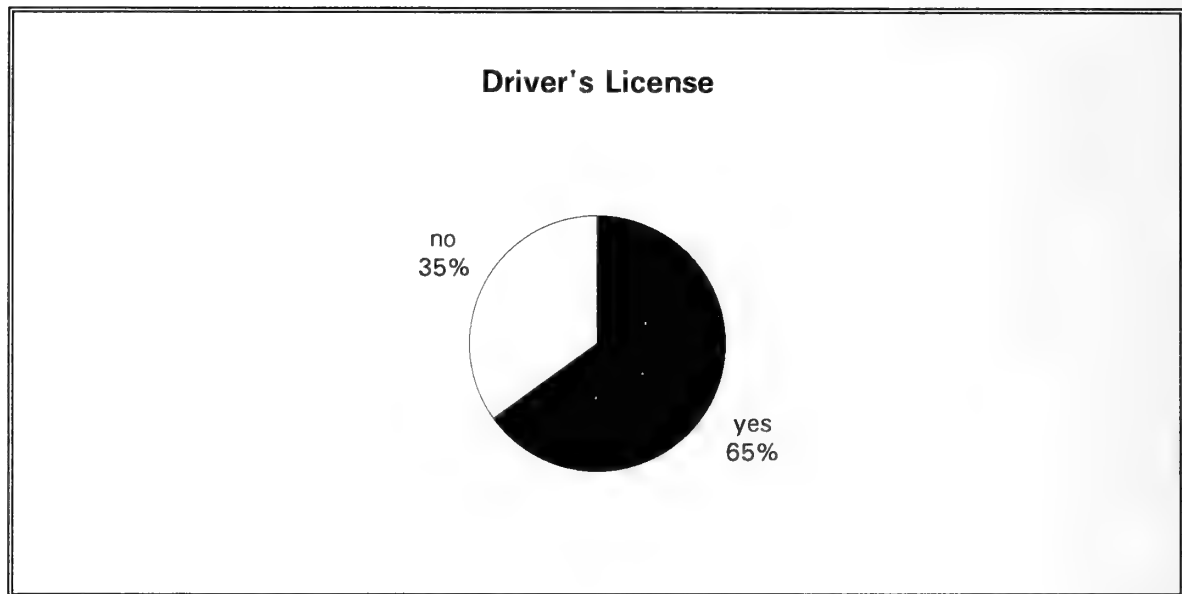


Overall, Ethiopian refugees smoke at a higher rate than Texas' general population. Male Ethiopians are more than twice as likely to smoke as female Ethiopians.

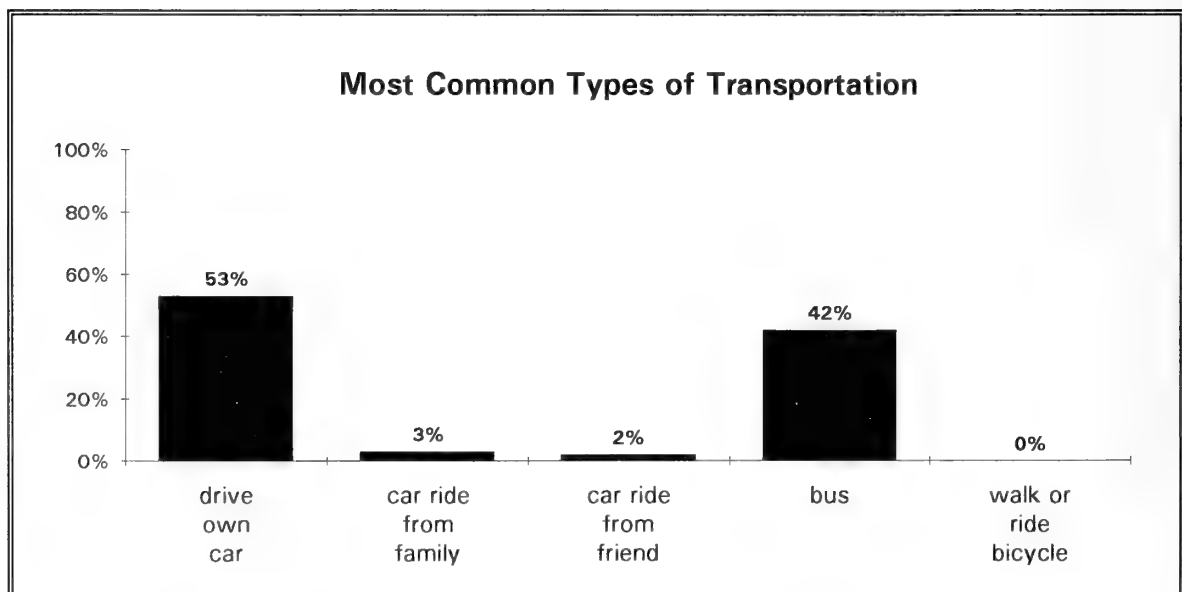


Ethiopian refugees who need service but don't speak English have a problem because service providers usually don't speak their language.

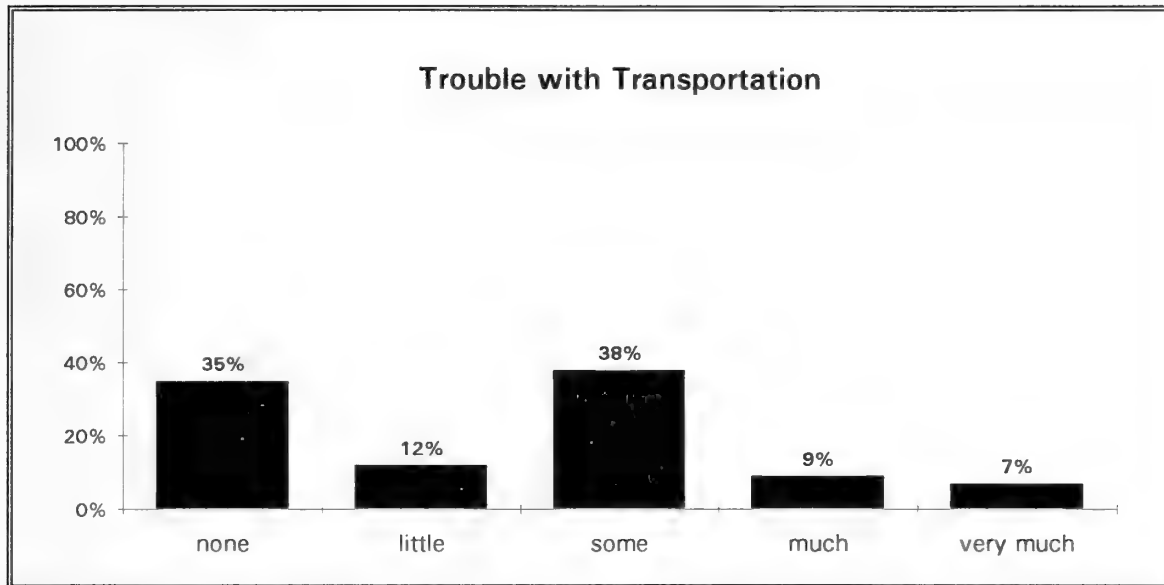
## TRANSPORTATION



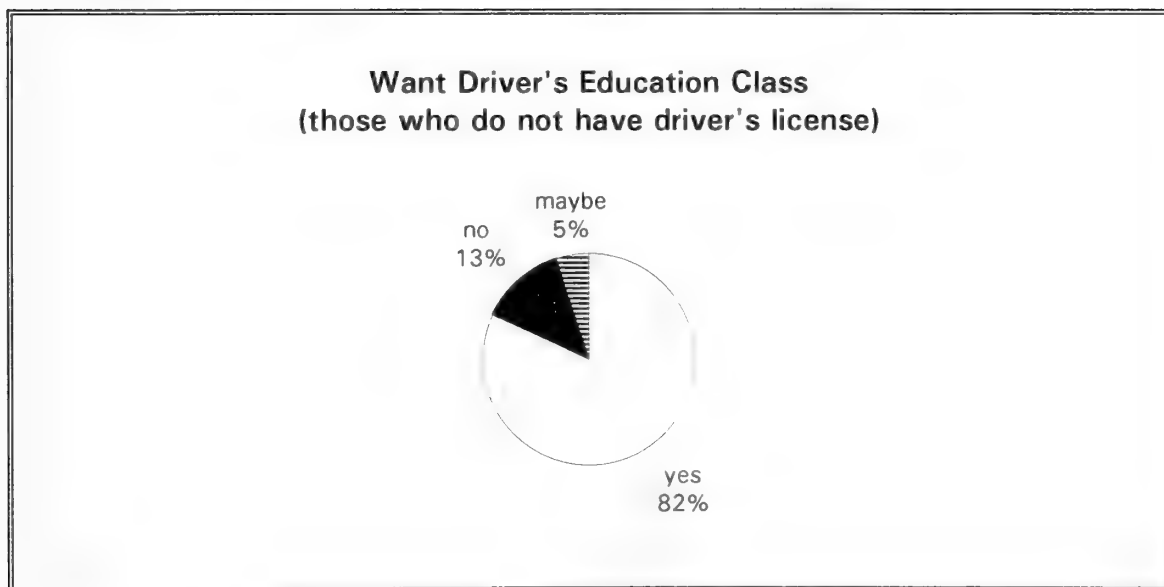
About two-thirds of Ethiopian refugees have a driver's license.



About half of Ethiopians drive their own car. Riding the bus is also very common.



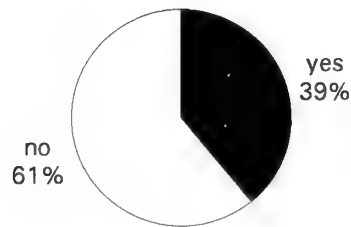
Transportation is a problem for many Ethiopians. More than half reported at least some trouble with transportation.



The majority of Ethiopian refugees who do not have a driver's license would like to get one.

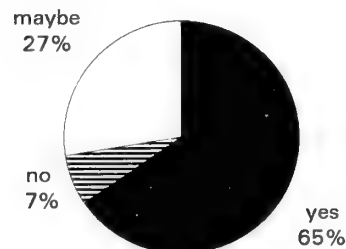
## CITIZENSHIP

### U.S. Citizenship (those who are eligible to apply)



Of those Ethiopian refugees who have been in the U.S. at least five years and are thus eligible to apply for naturalization, 39% have become U.S. citizens.

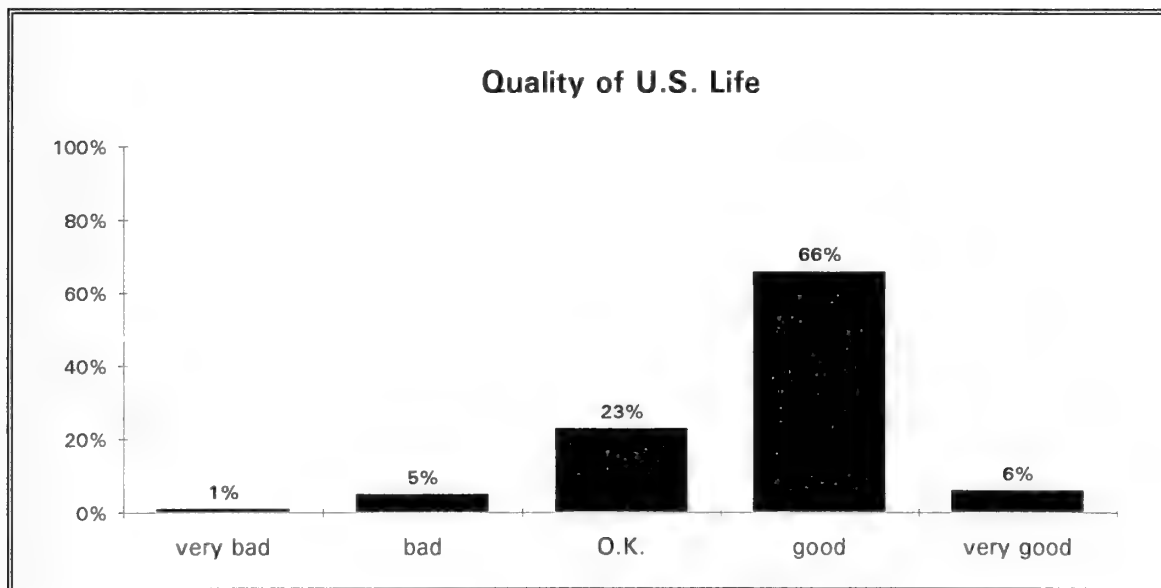
### Plans to Apply for Citizenship (those who are not currently citizens)



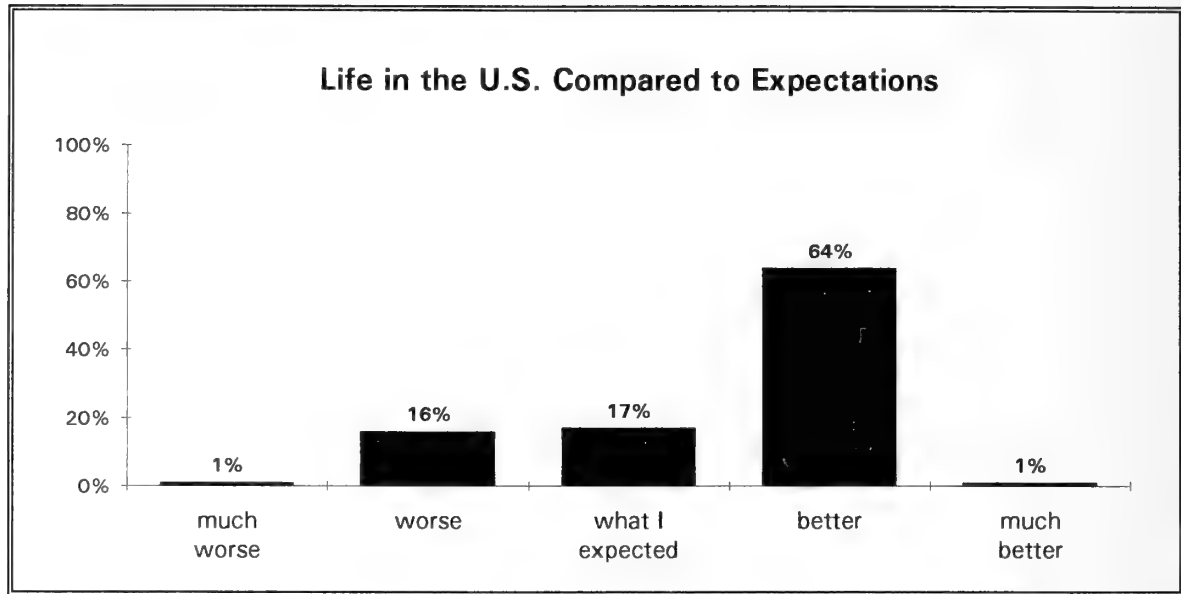
Most Ethiopians that have not yet naturalized plan to do so.



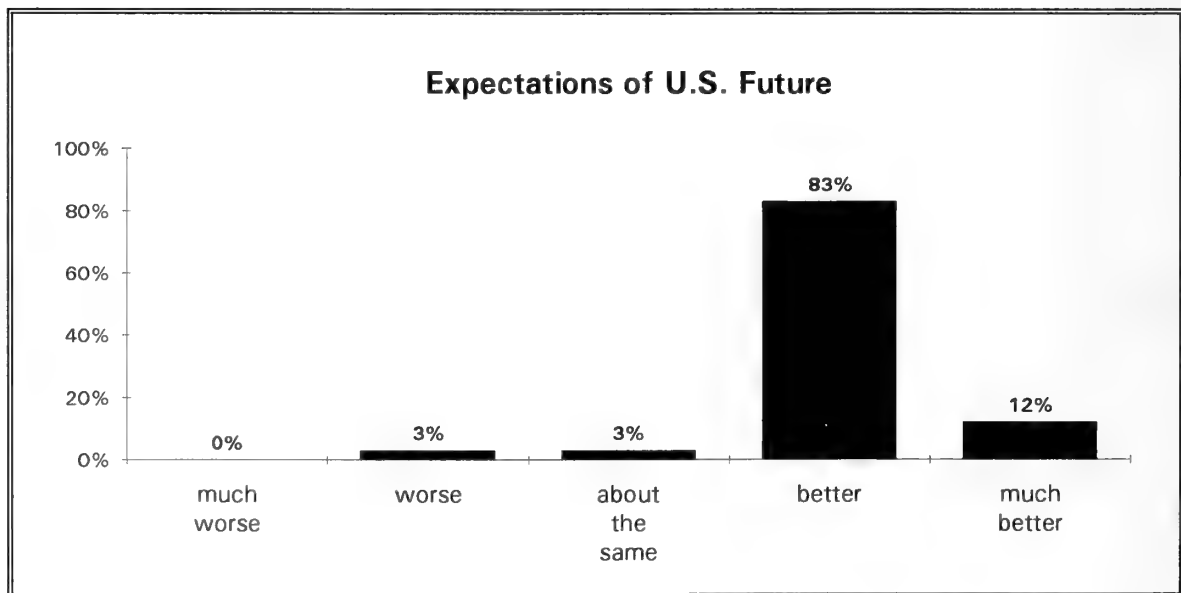
## QUALITY OF LIFE



Seventy-two percent of Ethiopian refugees consider their life in the U.S. to be good or very good. Six percent believe their life is bad or very bad.



The majority of Ethiopians believe their life in the U.S. is better than they expected it would be before arriving.



Most Ethiopian refugees expect their lives in the U.S. to get better or much better.

# METHODOLOGY

## Sample

Interviews took place in April, May, and June of 1993. The study's sample consisted of 1413 refugees age 18 and older in Harris County (Houston), Texas. The sample was made up of 803 Vietnamese, 243 Laotian, 203 former Soviet Union, and 156 Ethiopian refugees. The Vietnamese sample consisted of 286 randomly selected Vietnamese, 119 Vietnamese who were asked by interviewers to participate, and 398 Vietnamese who were randomly selected from a pool of 1770 refugees who had been to one of Houston's three refugee service agencies. The Laotian, former Soviet Union, and Ethiopian samples were randomly selected from a pool of refugees who had agreed to participate in the study. Harris County was selected for the study because an estimated 45% of Texas' refugees live in Houston. Of Texas' newly arrived refugees, 80% have resettled in urban areas (U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement).

## Survey Instrument

The survey instrument was a questionnaire with approximately 300 variables covering a diverse set of areas: demographics, education, employment, income, health, household, social services, and quality of life. Drafts of the questionnaire were reviewed by experts in the refugee community, and the questionnaire was pilot tested before finalized. The questionnaires were professionally translated into the four refugee languages.

## Interviewers

The interviews were conducted in the refugees' native language, or English when desired, by leaders from the refugee communities. Interviewers included case workers from refugee service agencies, religious leaders, former U.S. Census Bureau workers, and prominent members of the community. The University of Texas at Austin's Office of Survey Research conducted a day long training specifically prepared for the Texas Refugee Study interviewers.

## Data

All interviews were pre-assigned to interviewers. After the interview, each questionnaire was checked for completion. Verification checks were performed on 10% of the completed interviews by calling the interviewee and asking questions from the questionnaire to confirm their original answers. To ensure the data's integrity, the quantitative data was entered separately into two dBase files, a computer program compared the records from both files, and differences were checked and corrected.

### Weights

No weighting was applied to the Laotian, former Soviet Union, or Ethiopian refugee data. Vietnamese refugees arriving in the U.S. after 1989 were interviewed in greater proportions than actually represented in Texas. To correct for this, these data were weighted to decrease their value to 20% of all the Vietnamese interviews, the estimated share they represent in the Texas population. Similarly, interviews with Vietnamese refugees arriving before 1990 (the random sample) were weighted more heavily. Analysis was conducted on the weighted data with the original N of 803.

# LIMITATIONS

This analysis of data from the Texas Refugee Study, like all research, has limitations which should be considered when examining the results. The analysis is based on self-report data, and are thus accurate only to the extent reported by participants. Another limitation is that the entire sample was not random, but instead, random sampling from less-than-population-complete pools. Also, interviewee participation in the study was voluntary. Thus, these finding can only be extended to the entire population of refugees in Harris County to the degree that those who participated in the interviews represent those who refused participation. Another concern is that most interviews were conducted by telephone, and the segment of this population not owning a telephone was therefore excluded from this project. Individuals who participated were 18 years of age or older. As a result, the results do not necessarily represent the experiences of younger refugees.

Finally, these results apply to refugees from other geographical areas only to the extent that refugees living in Harris County are representative of other refugee populations. Such limitations should be taken into consideration when making generalizations about refugee populations not included in this analysis.





